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[“JASPER'S LITTLE GAME”]

VINCENT LUTTREL; OR, FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of “*Fighting for Freedom*,” etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
There is no other crime, no mad assault
To make old prose in modern rhyme more
sweet.

ISABEL DENTON had scarcely shaken hands with Evelyn Stewart, who had, with her permission, arranged to return in the evening and escort her home to her father's house, than that very active and almost ubiquitous personage, Mr. Straps, made his way to the morning room of Dorrington Hall. Here he found his young master in a capital humour looking out of the bay window of that cheerful apartment, which commanded a view of nearly a mile of undulating greenwood, dotted with majestic timber trees, and further giving at short intervals, a side view of every person, carriage, or other object which might pass along the main avenue of the park to or from the mansion. From this “coign of vantage” Jasper Dorrington had reconnoitred the movements of the unsuspecting lovers. He had watched the approach of the little messenger to Evelyn and Isabel interpreted correctly the effect of her message, and when he saw the young person respectfully take his leave of Isabel and stride off at what a pedestrian would call “a seven-mile bat” down the avenue, on his mission of mercy to Clovernook, he rubbed his hands, slapped his thigh, and sang, “Bravo! bravo! bel Bellors,” in the style of II Sergents in L'Elise when he has enlisted his rival as a soldier in the marching regiment. It was in this merry mood that Mr. Straps found Jasper Dorrington.

“Ha, Straps, how the model young man swallowed the old woman, like a gudgeon would suck

in a gentle! He's just gone off at racing pace down the avenue, and here comes his Amaryllis looking as all-a-moat and disconsolate as if her lover had started for an African exploration or a Polar voyage.”

Mister Straps, though he was a little puzzled by the name of Amaryllis and the other fine words of his master, sufficiently comprehended that all had had come off to his satisfaction.

“Her name, sir's, Izzyball, or may be Izzybella; leastwise that's what Mr. Stewart called her in my hearin'; for I overheard them a-conversing under the beech-clump yonder. She wanted to go with him to Clovernook, to see the old ‘oman, but he wouldn't have it. She'll stay here a good bit; I'm thinking, for he's to come back and fetch her home in the evenin', after the dinner-party up at the hall.”

“Very good, Straps, we'll take his measure of that. What time do you think he will return?”

“He said he'd try and be back again before nine o'clock, which he hoped would give her time to enjoy the party at the hall. She desired him not to think of that, for that she would be ready to go home at any time; then said he would not think of her leaving sooner, out o' respect to Sir Herbert and the company, and all that sort o' thing. And so the appointment stands for nine o'clock.”

“Straps, you must get out my Melton cart at eight, or thereabouts, and walk the brown cab slowly towards Clovernook. Whea you see the person coming, turn towards home, and bring me the news smartly. I'll be on the look-out for you on the old terrace, or else you must find me indoors. I'll drive Miss Denton home myself; and as I don't mean to go the straightest road, there will be no chance of our meeting the person on the way. You understand?”

“Precisely, sir. You shall have a good twenty minutes' start of him, and no mistake.”

As they talked thus, Isabel Denton was seen entering by the principal portico of the hall.

“I shall leave her for a few minutes to my father and mother's welcome,” thought Jasper, “and pre-

sent myself apropos of leading the ladies to the dining-room. . . . Ten minutes to four, by Jove, and no cards announcing 'four for half-past,' but four 'sharp' for the fish and soup, on together in old fashion.”

Jasper hurried off to his dressing-room, and as the clock struck four he entered the antechamber where the guests were assembled. He was not one moment too soon, for his “jolly old governor,” as he somewhat irreverently styled Sir Herbert, was in the very act of reminding a young farmer that there was a pretty young lady, Miss Denton, to whom he might as well offer his arm.

Jasper Dorrington caught the words, and with well-acted surprise, interposed.

“What! is it possible that Miss Denton is alone? Where's my dear friend, Stewart?”

“Mr. Stewart is gone to Clovernook, Jasper,” said Sir Herbert. Miss Denton has just been making us aware of the circumstances. We must all regret his absence, but the call of duty must be obeyed, Jasper.” And the hearty old baronet nodded at his son. “You will take in Miss Denton, as Mr. Stewart's best friend.”

Jasper Dorrington bowed smilingly, and took possession of Isabel's arm with an emprisevement that slightly disconcerted her.

“How fortunate!” whispered he. “Yet I am truly sorry that Evelyn is not able to be with us. Curious inconsistency, is it not?”

At this moment Sir Herbert had found a damsel for the loutish young farmer who had been so cleverly dispossessed by Jasper of the post of cavalier servant to Miss Denton, not altogether to the satisfaction of Isabel herself.

But as dinner was announced the elders of the party paired off, leading the way—Jasper Dorrington courteously waiving the precedence to which his position entitled him until quite half the company had entered the saloon.

Having chosen a seat for Isabel about midway, he placed himself beside her, with the remark that he had fully expected that chair would have been occu-

pied by his dear friend Evelyn; "but really, when a fellow devoted himself to such a profession as medicine or the Church, that is, if he meant to follow it in earnest, he is no longer his own master, his time belongs to the public by day or night." He, Jasper, had an aunt who seriously recommended the Church, instead of the bar, to his consideration in the choice of a pursuit, as no man should be without a profession. With this view, he said, he had read theology for a term or two; but the best years of a man's life must be spent in a starving curacy, and once a parson always a parson. In consequence of these considerations he, Jasper Dorrington, had entered at Middle Temple, and having "eaten out his three years," had just been called, so that he was now "a counsel learned in the law," qualified to hold a brief and plead in any of her Majesty's Courts, or to give an "opinion" on any point which might be submitted to him.

Isabel listened with as much attention as she could command to the fluent commonplaces of Jasper Dorrington, who mistook her silence as a general assent to his propositions. The second course had been removed, and Jasper had filled Isabel's glass with sherry, when Sir Herbert called his and the company's attention to the circumstance that he, Sir Herbert, and his lady would "take wine" with them, adding the expression of his regret at the enforced absence of their excellent minister, the Reverend Evelyn Stewart. "In consequence of which," said he, "you have had myself as a necessary substitute in saying grace to this repast. However," continued the old gentleman facetiously, and with a wink at his stately better half, "Lady Dorrington has just possessed me of a washer brought to her by a little bird, which I shall not further disclose than by telling you to drink the very old toast of 'The single married, and the married, happy,' with which I couple the name, in the absence, of our exemplary and excellent clergyman, the Reverend Evelyn Stewart."

Long and long went the clattering of plates and forks, the drumming of feet, and the jingling of glasses in hearty applause, though many of the farmer tenants' spouses thought Sir Herbert's announcement very lame and imperfect, seeing that he had not given the name of his young curate's intended.

"Did you hear that?" said Mrs. Broadhurst, her next neighbour, "one young clergyman suggesting to be married; whatever can it be to? Depends on it it's nobody in company, else Sir Herbert would have said so."

"I don't see that at all," responded Mrs. Greenhill, "wouldn't be deliberate exactly to name the young lady, though I fancy as I can guess; there, the eldest Miss Flamborough has been seating her cap at him ever since he read himself in, and I suppose she has hooked him at last."

There was one in that company, however, who was left in no doubt as to whom the merry old host intended to apply his good-natured rally.

Jasper Dorrington had observed scrutinizingly the countenance of Isabel and the ill-concealed indifference, but really painful anxiety, with which she watched the speaker as he made his brief speech. Her face and neck were suffused with crimson, and the long-drawn breath, like a sigh of relief, with which she welcomed the finish of his speech, was not lost on Jasper Dorrington.

"I'll get at this girl's secret before I sleep," thought Jasper. "My governor's an invertebrate old joker, but he has certainly got hold of some information about a courtship between Evelyn Stewart and Isabel Denton, so it behoves me to be cautious."

Jasper Dorrington, in a gentle tone of assumed indifference, recalled the wandering thoughts of poor Isabel:

"Please me, Miss Denton, what has my father been saying to cause a commotion among the ladies of the company? You've no idea how the old gentleman's given to what he calls 'quizzing.' I didn't quite catch his last remarks on account of the tittering and giggling of those Miss Flamborough's. By-the-by, they needn't take the inuendo of my father to themselves, I can assure you, though the story runs, Miss Denton, that my friend Stewart has proposed for the eldest." Isabel controlled her agitation with some difficulty.

"It is really surprising," continued Jasper Dorrington, affecting not to notice Isabel's emotion, "on how very slender a foundation some young ladies will build a very solid-looking matrimonial future. I'm sure one would think, to see the blushings and gigglings of Mary Flamborough, that Evelyn had popped the question formally, and been accepted by mamma. Allow me to fill your glass? —Champagne," said he to an attendant, and the old-fashioned lily-cup (for in those days we had not got to the tazza) foamed with the pink Sillery. The like being done with his own glass, Jasper bowed to Isabel, who was so completely taken by surprise that she could not decline the challenge.

She, however, to Jasper's disappointment, merely sipped a spoonful of the exhilarating fluid. As her half glass of amber chablis and ditto of golden sherry yet stood beside her, Jasper Dorrington saw that any endeavour to steal a march in that direction (a manoeuvre he had often found successful) was futile. He, therefore, confining himself to a remark that he feared the wine was not to Miss Denton's taste, in a confidential undertone continued:

"If that young lady knew as much as I do she would not assume such an air of confidence. 'Pon my word, Miss Denton, it almost makes a freckled young fellow afraid to gossip with a girl, and to show her a little sincere politeness, for fear he should be set down as engaged, and be asked what are his 'intentions' by papa or a brother, when he really has no 'intentions' at all. Evelyn's a very good fellow, and I hope I'm not betraying confidence when I say that I know more than one instance, at Oxford and elsewhere, in which a girl has considered herself as 'wearing the wings' for Evelyn's inconstancy, when I'm sure humbly thought of doing the amiable and attractive as a pleasure and pretty young lady."

Isabel felt a pang, and a sharp stab in the region of the heart. The author of ingenuousness herself, she could only suspect deceit in a美事. Yet her timid heart misgave her. Jasper Dorrington was Evelyn's true friend. He could have no motive in misrepresenting him. He certainly knew nothing of the love-passage between them that day. On the contrary, his remarks were entirely directed to Miss Flamborough, who had evidently applied Sir Herbert's allusions to herself. She, therefore, by an effort not unobserved by the artful Jasper, quenched her suspicion, and made a remark to the effect that her acquaintance with Mr. Stewart, for whose abilities and acquirements she held the highest respect, was but of a few months' duration. Jasper Dorrington again took up the thread of his discussion.

"If Miss Denton will excuse me," he observed; "my acquaintance, nay, my friendship, for Mr. Stewart extends over several years of college and public life. I, too, my good young lady, have admired his fine abilities, his manners, and his earnest devotion to his studies. Yet I could wish," said he, in a regretful, absent, sorrowful tone, "that Evelyn had but chosen the Church as his vocation."

Isabel listened with undivided interest.

"I do," said he, interpreting her look, "if I may, believe I have been somewhat instrumental in convincing you of his vocation. Such an impression of language, such a readiness in expressing himself, such self-control, such good taste in the choice of epithets, always placing the right word in the right place! Excuse me, Miss Denton, if I am somewhat enthusiastic in my praise of Evelyn's gifts. With such talents, he must have risen rapidly at this bar, been listened to in the senate, and achieved rank in the public service at home or abroad; but he has chosen, I can hardly tell why, to bury those talents in the obscure field of a country curacy."

"I can scarcely follow you, Mr. Dorrington," said Isabel, timidly. "What mission can be more honourable and dignified than conveying the glad tidings of peace to the afflicted?"

"True, Miss Denton, true. But there are secrets in some men's lives that are as well kept unrevealed; and Evelyn Stewart's I suspect—observe, pray, that I am not certain—is one of those lives wherein a certain bias, slight in itself, and almost imperceptible at the outset, carries the whole course of a man's after career daily farther and farther from its original destination." Isabel Denton looked eagerly and enquiringly at the speaker.

"I am afraid I have said too much, or too little, Miss Denton, and really I must change the subject. May I ask you, how you propose to return home? Not alone, I hope. Will Mr. Stewart return?"

"I believe so," said Isabel, her bosom racked with dread and uncertainty.

Jasper Dorrington went on: "Oh, I don't doubt he'll return if he promised; I'll be bound that he will. I believe that Miss Flamborough expects him; but I'll learn that myself presently."

Isabel felt her courage or her indignation, we cannot say which, rise, and she determined to probe the truth, even at the cost of the destruction of her hopes and the confirmation of her worst fears.

"I trust," said she, with an assumed firmness, "that you will not consider me impertinently curious, nor asking of you a betrayal of friendship, but will you explain an expression you made use of with reference to that young lady: it was that if she knew what you know she would not take Mr. Stewart's declarations for all they seemed to express?" Isabel paused, she could proceed no farther. Jasper Dorrington was cool and prepared.

"Miss Denton, I must pray your pardon. My can-

dour and incaution have involved me in a dilemma from which I see no escape. May I ask your promise that you will not repeat what I may say to you in confidence, but accept it, as it is meant, in sincerity and friendship?"

Isabel cautiously gave the promise.

"I should indeed despise myself, Mr. Dorrington, did I betray the trust you reposed in me. I am a weak and inexperienced girl, and my short and limited acquaintance with the world and its ways fills me with fears for my future."

"It is my painful duty, and I accept it," said Jasper Dorrington. "You must know that among our professors at Oxford the Reverend Dr. _____ held a deservedly high and respected position. Into his house my friend Evelyn was entered to read for the classics and mathematics; his special study, law and jurisprudence, being provided for under another professor. My friend Evelyn had not been long under the doctor's roof when it was rumoured that he had gained the affections of that dignitary's only daughter, and it was added that, as her hand would be given to a clergyman only, that straightway my friend Evelyn abandoned her for theology, and became a divinity student. Ecclesiastical promotion occasioned the resignation by the doctor of his professorship, and the secret of the young student was disclosed to her father. Pray don't misunderstand me, Miss Denton, I merely speak as the rumour runs."

Jasper paused.

"Excuse me, Mr. Dorrington, pray go on." "I hardly know how, indeed. The doctor was highly dressed, and I have no mind to trouble Miss Flamborough, who is the person most likely to be affected by such a disclosure. We have our own personal knowledge, and it was the jibeous round of mystery, which I thought at the moment were intended for Miss Flamborough, that induced these unpleasant disclosures, of which, Miss Denton, I pray you to bury the remembrance."

With these words Jasper Dorrington changed the conversation. Now we say that in left the ranking table of apoplexy festering in the heart-wound he had caused?

Can we blame Isabel Denton? Totally unversed in the ways of the world, her living, confiding nature shocked in its most sensitive part by what the innocent believed to be the disclosure of an inconstancy which she recognized as despised and abhorred, her pride and sensitiveness enlisted themselves against the speaker, and to the immediate repetition of what he had said he tried to be the mere impulse of a sudden passion acting on a flicker of thought. Should indeed such herself could Evelyn Stewart witness unworthy.

The suspitious thus artfully sown seemed to her jealous mind—for she was jealous, blindly jealous for the moment—

confirmation strong
as proof of Holy Writ.

Jasper Dorrington rattled on, as an accomplished flaneur might, leaving the poison to do its work, and it did so.

The company rose from table, the ordinary etiquette of the ladies retiring being dispensed with in favour of the more old-fashioned and homely country custom of a walk in the open air before tea. The guests formed themselves into groups, or strolled away in couples as best pleased them.

The younger revellers had received their farewell refreshment of milk and cake or bread and butter, and were marshalled by their teachers and elders on their way home. The runners, dancers, and romancers were tired out, and had assembled in a crowd; some sitting, some lying, on the lawn in front of the mansion, awaiting to give their host and entertainer a parting cheer and farewell!

Sir Herbert and his lady came forth, accompanied by the elite of their guests; and near them stood Jasper Dorrington and Isabel.

The last cheer died away, and the merrymakers departed. Hands were shaken heartily, and the better sort were conveyed to their homes by every description of vehicle, from the lumbering market cart to the light spring ditto, the country gig, the fly, the phaeton, and the capacious break-wagonette. Jasper Dorrington stood silently watching the sunset with Isabel Denton on his arm. He did not for the moment choose to interrupt her thoughts, for he saw Joe Straps with the Melton cart coming along the avenue at a slapping trot. Straps affected not to notice his master, and was apparently making for the stables when his master hailed him.

"Hi! hello! Here you fellow, where are you driving with that trap?"

Straps turned the cab dexterously at his master's call and touched his hat obsequiously.

"Bin over to Cloverhook, sir, to ask Mr. Flamborough to come and see the chestnut. He's fallen dead lame,

and I'm afraid it's a knicker, which he thinks so too—"

"Oh, never mind the chintz just now. Jump down and take her head, Straips! How fortunate, Miss Denton; that I should have so favourable a chance of conveying you quickly to your home. By-the-way, Straips, did you see anything of Mr. Stewart on the road?"

"No, sir, but I heard of him. Poor old Mrs. Botherby's a-dying, and he's staying with her at her darter's place."

"Excellent young man!" said Jasper. Isabel almost started at the epithet. "I'm afraid, Miss Denton, that it would make it inconveniently late for you if we waited for Evelyn."

Isabel saw nothing but the natural course of events in the artful suggestion. Nevertheless she felt that to leave before the time appointed would seem strange and a breach of common courtesy. Jasper divined her thoughts.

"It would take nearly an hour, and the way to Rosemead is rather lonely across the fields," said he, meaningly. "I really think, Miss Denton, that a sent-behind my cob and a fifteen minutes' trot would be the pleasantest mode of reaching your home? It is for you to decide, however," he added, "and for me to acquiesce."

"I will avail myself of your kindness," said Isabel.

"Your arm, Straips."

That dapper servant raised his bent left arm almost to the horizontal, Isabel placed her right hand on his shoulder, Jasper Dorrington raised her left hand with his right, and almost as her small foot touched the broad roughed step of the carriage she was lifted into the seat. Jasper Dorrington passed round to the offside of the vehicle and almost leaping into the driving seat, gathered the reins in his left hand.

"Lo! her go, Straips!" A gentle touch of the whipcord, and turning the cob sharply, away went the couple by the somewhat circuitous highway to Rosemead.

Straips watched them until a turn at the foot of a rising ground hid them from view. Then with a self-satisfied grin he cast his eyes downward to the narrow lane leading from Cloverhook; and there, up the tortuous ascent, with steady energy, toiled the worthy and winged-minded young minister in some anxiety as to keeping his appointment, but never doubting that Isabel would be awaiting his arrival. What was his astonishment when Mr. Straips thus addressed him.

"Oh, please, sir, I'm desired to say," he did not tell by whom, "that Miss Denton has waited till she was afraid it'd be dark before she could get home, and there's no moon to-night till eleven o'clock. So my master, Mr. Jasper, has given her a start in his dog-cart, which will save you a long round before you could get home to Cloverhook."

"Gone? How long have they gone?"

"Too long for any one who's not well mounted to overtake them. I'm thinking," replied Straips.

"Did not Miss Denton say she expected me? It is barely nine o'clock?"

"Don't know as she did, sir. Master asked her to let him drive her home; it'd be lots for walking, and, in course, she accepted his offer, as any other lady might do."

Evelyn Stewart turned away. His heart leaped into his throat. Was this the conduct of Isabel Denton on the very day of their solemn betrothal? for such, in the eyes and to the heart of Evelyn Stewart were the promises given and received at the Lovers' Stile; and which he believed had only two mortal witnesses and the unlooking eye of Heaven. He groaned heavily and strode onward almost unconscious of the road in which his steps were directed.

CHAPTER XL.

ISABEL DENTON possessed a large share of that calm self-possession which is the strongest shield against the impertinences of male presumption, insomuch as the wearer is all-unconscious of the repellent force of her defensive armour. She had not the slightest suspicion (how should she?) of the elaborate and cunning scheme of Jasper Dorrington to obtain an introduction to her father's house, and thereby, as he thought, clear the road for further progress in supplanting Evelyn in her affections. Not that the young baronet in posses had any very definite idea or even care of the upshot of the game he was pursuing. It was sufficient for him that here was a pretty rustic girl, of what he considered an inferior grade in society, who, if she had been such a one as Jasper Dorrington set down all girls of her class, must be highly flattered by his attentions, gratified by such presents as he might make, and open to all the vulgar arts of adulation by which he believed every

woman was accessible. Accordingly, during the short drive which intervened between Dorrington Hall and Rosemead, Jasper had so plied Isabel with compliments on her beauty and side-shots at Evelyn as to annoy her with the one, and positively anger her with the other. Hence, before they reached Rosemead her agitation had made her silent, and when they alighted Jasper Dorrington was certainly unprepared for the cool thanks he received, and the yet more frigid farewell with which Isabel evidently thought to get rid of him.

"That is my father's house, sir," said Isabel, breaking a five minutes' silence on her part, during which Jasper had been trying in vain to improve the opportunity, "the detached cottage on the declivity to the right of the road. My father is scarcely well enough to receive visitors for whom he is unprepared. It was thoughtless of me not to remember that I will, with your permission, alight at the end of the road and spare you the drive of the very stony lane."

"Oh, don't mention it; there's nothing in the road my cob will mind going through. Of course I could not wish to intrude on your father's privacy, far from it. I will, however, make bold to set you down at the door of your delightful dwelling, and await your decision as to a present or a deferred introduction to your father. I can assure you, Miss Denton," he added, perceiving she was about to speak, "that I have more than ones, in passing, observed your charming abode, and longed to know more of the dwellers in as lovely and tasteful a dwelling."

Isabel saw no immediate loophole for escape, besides the dialogue, brief as it was, was cut short by the rattling of the cob's hoofs and the grinding of the wheels of their vehicle over the deep and coarse layer of large gravel-stones which formed the short sideway to Rosemead Villa.

Jasper jumped lightly to the ground with the reins in his left hand, and seizing the cob by the head, quickly secured the animal to the gate-post and rang the bell sharply. Then he advanced to the near-side step, and assisting Isabel to alight, walked beside her to the embowered portico.

"I will wait here, with your permission, Miss Denton," said he, bowing, "that I may hear the state of your father's health."

The servant opened the glass-door.

"Nay, Mr. Dorrington," said Isabel, "I cannot allow the son of my kindly host to stand outside; I pray you step within doors."

Jasper Dorrington did so, and for a few seconds busied himself in an inspection of the elegances and nick-nacks of the small waiting parlour.

"My father will be happy to see Mr. Jasper Dorrington," said Isabel, returning by the same entrance with which the reader is already familiar.

Hugh Denton was much better than when we last saw him. The wear of the day, occasioned by the Liverpool clerk, had roused him, and he felt immensely relieved as well as pleased at his own promptitude in destroying the falsified document, and in what he considered the successful disposal of his dreaded persecutor, by furnishing him the means of departure from England, and also placing him in such a position that he must embrace the opportunity. He was also pleased that the unusually long absence of Isabel had prevented her knowledge of any of the circumstances of this latest soundrelism of Vincent Luttrell, so that he could avoid any questionings which her filial affection might suggest and his weakness might prompt him to answer. Hugh Denton was therefore in unusually good spirits.

"Seat yourself, my dear sir," said he, "I am truly pleased to make the acquaintance of the son of Sir Herbert Dorrington. Had I been less of an infidel I should have paid my respects in person to your father. My uncle, Sir Piers Pomfret—you know the Pomfrets, an old Yorkshire family—was at Rugby with your father, and often spoke of him when I was a boy. Ah me! that's not so long ago as you would think, Mr. Dorrington, for my years yet number but thirty-nine."

"Sir Piers Pomfret?" said Jasper, "he had a son, Lionel Pomfret, whose acquaintance I made in Paris. This is a strange coincidence; for I look upon young Lionel Pomfret as having saved my life. It was upon the occasion of a sword duel forced upon me by an assailant at a public ball at the opera. I struck a fellow who had passed a gross insult upon England and Englishmen; he challenged me and I accepted his challenge, when the poltroon, fearing the consequences of his rashness, hired a fencing-master—a professional swordsman—to represent him in the combat. My second, young Pomfret, detected the trick, recognised the professor as his own preceptor, and the party retired from the ground somewhat with confusion. I should doubtless have been sorely wounded or have fallen a victim to the villainy but for Lionel Pomfret."

"I am expecting a visit from my nephew," said Hugh Denton, "he is coming over to stay with me week or two."

"How happy I shall be to meet him," replied Jasper. "With the exception of our young curate, Mr. Stewart, we have no visitors, and I look to Lionel Pomfret's stay with us as a relief to Isabel's loneliness. Though, indeed, I have never seen a symptom of ennui in my dear girl. Her books, flowers, birds, drawings, and her class of little singers at the church, with the onerous task of nursing and tending her fretful old father, fully occupy her time."

"Eh, what?" exclaimed Hugh Denton, looking at his daughter, whose face was pale with emotion, "Isabel, my darling, have I said anything to affect you thus?"

Isabel's thoughts at that instant were far away. She was recalling the occurrences of the last ten hours, and the flushed and imploring face of Evelyn Stewart rose up before her mind's eye just as she became aware of the words of her father's speech. She turned upon him with a stony, vacant stare, gave a short, sharp cry, and would have fallen but for the support of Jasper Dorrington's arms. Her overwrought system had succumbed to the shock.

Hugh Denton was really alarmed. He rang the bell; the attendant appeared, and salts, burnt feathers and vinegar soon brought her back to consciousness. Jasper Dorrington was assiduously chafing her hands, presenting a goblet of hartshorn and water to her lips, and paying every possible attention to the swooning girl; Hugh Denton stood, bending in anxious solicitude over the head of the sofa on which she lay, while the serving maid ran hither and thither at each new request for some other restorative. At length Isabel slowly recovered consciousness, and her first desire was to be allowed to breathe the outer air. The apartment was lighted by a large sunbeam, the rays of which rendered the outer darkness deep by contrast, for the sun was down and the rising moon as yet showed scarcely an aura in the eastern sky. Jasper proffered his arm for her support as she rose. She accepted it, and had taken but two steps towards the French window, her back being towards the lamp, when she became aware of a wan and spectral visage, white in the blackness of the night, gazing at her with fixed despair. Her father, the attendant, and Jasper Dorrington were all absorbed with their patient so that Isabel met with her eyes alone the reproachful vision. Her knees trembled, and with a faint groan she sank once more senseless to the ground.

It was indeed the face of Evelyn Stewart. The miserable man had almost instinctively taken the familiar path to Rosemead. Torn with anxiety, and determined to assure himself of her safe arrival, he had determined to ascertain that fact without intruding himself upon her. Having approached the villa from the field-side he had not even seen the horse and trap which had conveyed her thither; but had drawn nearer and nearer, surprised at what he thought sounds of commotion in the house. At last, as he drew close to the window, conquered by his anxiety, he became a witness of the recovery of his beloved from her swoon; beheld with horror and despair what seemed to him the accepted attentions of Jasper Dorrington; cast one glance of unutterable misery at the faithless one, and vanished into night.

If Evelyn Stewart had walked as in a dream towards Rosemead, he fled from it as one pursued by a fiend.

He took no note of time or distance until he reached the quiet shelter of the parsonage at Cloverhook.

It was a late hour before Jasper Dorrington left.

After assisting the attendant to convey the partially conscious Isabel upstairs, he descended to the parlour.

There, under well-assumed anxiety for the sufferer, he lingered until nearly eleven, delighting Hugh Denton with his fluent conversation, and clearly drawing closer the remote points of acquaintance ship between the two families.

At the hour of eleven when he departed he had more than twice received a general invitation to drop in at Rosemead as one of the family.

The illness of Isabel Denton was protracted, and gave Jasper abundant opportunities of availing himself of Hugh Denton's civility.

At length Lionel Pomfret arrived. He had accepted his cousin Denton's invitation from various motives.

He was a pleasant, well-informed, truthful and honourable young man, moderately good looking, and of exceptional athletic powers. He was a powerful rather than a graceful or skilful rower, and therefore never rose beyond being chosen as a valuable No. 4 in bumpy water or a heavy pull. Nor was he

clever in a sprint or a hundred yards; but in a half-mile or upwards he could give a start to the swift ones and beat them on the finish.

Then at racquets he was great in a long game, while at long or high leap and hare and hounds Lionel Pomfret was like a Yorkshire horse—second to none.

At wrestling and the gloves he was a standard and a champion.

Add to all this that Lionel Pomfret was as gentle as he was strong, and as peaceable as he was strong, and you have the physical and psychical of the Yorkshire squire who had come to see and stay awhile with Hugh Denton, to enjoy the fishing, boating, shooting, riding, hunting, or any other rural sport and exercise the country might present.

The absence of Isabel from the choir, though sincerely lamented by her young pupils and by some of the congregation, was so fully accounted for by the reports of her severe illness and slowly improving health as to excite no suspicion in any way connecting Evelyn Stewart with her malady.

The high sense of duty and self-respect of the young clergyman enforced his strict absence from Rosemead, and this circumstance alone was commented upon by some of the more shrewd of the young ladies who attended the church of Clovernook.

"Is it not quite extraordinary how pale, and I may almost say reserved, our model clergyman has become?" said Miss Yellowby. "Ever since he squired Miss Denton that day up to Dorrington he's never been near her nor her father's house."

"You may depend on't that what Walker the postman and Suds the barber pretend they saw at the stile is all rubbish. She cut him dead, that's what she did, and never since has she been a fingerling the organ on Wednesday and teaching the brats. There's a screw loose depend on't."

"Of course there is. She kept on with him as long as she could, and then when she found her cousin was coming she cast him off."

"You're out there, Susan; out entirely. Just as much as Miss Flamborough was when she took Sir Herbert Dorrington's speech about he's marrying somebody to be meant for herself."

"We shall see. But here's Mr. Pomfret, Miss Denton's new visitor. They say he's the intended for her. As to Mr. Stewart he no more looks at Miss Flamborough in spite of all her fan-tossing and ogling and throwing herself in his way, than if she was nobody. You'll see: it's Isabel Denton and no one else, and if she has jilted him it's for Jasper Dorrington she's done it. Don't you know he drove her home from the revel that very night in his dogcart, and that there it was tied at the door of Rosemead Villa till I don't know what hour? But Mrs. Simon, who lives on the roadside, says she's sure it was after midnight that he drove home to the hall galloping like mad in the moonlight. And ever since, I can answer for it, Miss Denton has sought shy of Mr. Stewart, and he's never been up to Rosemead, although Mr. Jasper has been driving over there almost every day. I don't think it wants any conjecture to guess at all this means."

Thus ran the gossip of Clovernook, which, like most other gossip, ran as wide of the mark as could be.

How this embarrassing complication received its solution must be reserved for an after period of our story.

(To be continued.)

WOMEN'S AGES.

THAT age is an honourable state in man may be quite true, but that it is considered so in woman is not so equally certain. Age in man commands respect, and entitles him, naturally, to a certain position in the world which a very young man, no matter how great his abilities, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to attain to. Women, on the contrary, as they become older, although perhaps more respected, are not so much sought after, and receive less attention from the male portion of the community, at least, than they did in the days of their youth, and, as man's admiration is very dear to the fair sex, it is not to be wondered at if they should try every means to retain it.

It is only for a very few years during her life that a woman is satisfied with her age. Most girls are educated to look upon marriage as the one great object of their lives, and as there is an age before which a girl cannot reasonably expect to enter into that holy state so also is there one after which the chances of their doing so become less and less each year. Thus it is that we find very young girls anxious to add a few years to their ages as young ladies of a certain age are to subtract a few years from theirs.

But it is not only unmarried women who are anxious

to appear young, or who disguise their ages. Many married women take as much trouble as single ones do to attain that object, but the difficulties they encounter are greater, and they are not always successful. Every unmarried female is styled a "girl" for years after she has lost all right to the juvenile name; but no matter how young a female is, when she becomes a wife she ceases to be a girl, and is called a "woman." This alone gives the unmarried woman a great advantage over the married one in the fight against age; but in addition to this, there is always that landmark in the march of time—her wedding day to date from, which renders any complete disguise of true age impossible among her own friends. Of course, if she is a mother, her children are constantly reminding her and others how old she is getting, and it is useless her trying to appear younger than she really is.

THE DRAMA.

JANAUSCHEK AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

WHEN a foreign actress essays to perform in the English tongue the British public is naturally dubious as to her probable success. In burlesque or comedy it does not matter so much that her speech is imperfect; indeed, the foreign accent gives a piquancy and a charm. Some of our English opera-bouffe actresses have gone so far as to affect it. However, as soon as she made her appearance upon the stage it became evident that the report concerning Madame Janauschek's remarkable mastery of the English language was not an exaggeration; and all through her performance she scarcely committed one serious error of pronunciation. The play was "Medea"—if we mistake not, the old version which Miss Avonia Jones used to play. To our modern tastes the drama is of too gruesome a nature to be thoroughly palatable, and on this occasion it was little more than a framework for the declamations of the Cochian sorceress, the other parts, with scarcely an exception, being reduced to walking shadows. Jason is the only one who has any active share in the story, and Mr. Charles Warner acts the part with a considerable amount of force, ungenial as it is. As for Medea, Madame Janauschek, though at first somewhat too measured and declamatory for the tastes of the audience, speedily conquered them, and universal applause greeted her powerful denunciation of Jason in the second act. In truth, we have been so unaccustomed of late years to actresses of the classical school that a performance such as Janauschek's seems strange to us at first sight. It is little, however, to say that for many years we have not witnessed so powerful a piece of acting. We shall not say further of her at present than that all who admire the higher and legitimate walks of the drama should lose no opportunity of seeing Janauschek.

CHARING CROSS THEATRE.

MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD has presented to the holiday-makers an attractive bill of fare—no fewer than three novelties on the same evening. The first is a one-act comedietta by Mr. H. Taitbott, entitled "All for Them," a piece of small pretensions, but favourably received by the audience, and ably supported by Messrs. Soutar, Royce and Temple. Following this is an interlude, from the pen of Mr. H. J. Byron, entitled "Twenty Pounds a Year, all Found; or, Out of a Situation, Refusing Twenty." This sketch treats of the relations between servants and their employers, presenting us with portraits of the over-indulgent mistress and her antithesis. It is exceedingly funny, and affords scope for some very vivacious acting on the part of Miss E. Farren, who, as the boy Kettles, is irresistible. The entertainment terminates with a burlesque by Mr. Reece, entitled "Young Rip Van Winkle." It is written with great smartness and goes with "amazing swiftness," being interspersed with many lively songs and effective dances. It is founded on the well-known drama, the plot of which is cleverly travestied. Rip, who is represented as a veritable ship of the old block—getting into debt, wrenching off knockers, and otherwise rendering himself obnoxious to his neighbours in the Catskill Mountains—finds an institution called the "Husbands' Retreat." Thither resort all hen-pecked husbands and others wishing to enjoy the solace of their pipes and skittles unmarrred by the presence of their wives. The wives discover the retreat; Rip is punished for

his artifice, and is induced to believe that he has slept for twenty years in the Catskill Mountain. The honours of the performance were shared by Miss E. Farren and Mr. E. W. Royce, who, as Rip and Derrick, were irresistibly grotesque. The piece is well mounted, the scenery reflecting great credit on Messrs. Gordon and Harford. It is a complete success.

GAIETY THEATRE.

OTWAY's tragedy of "Venice Preserved" has been presented at this theatre. We remember the time when this drama was an attractive feature on our London playbills, drawing together large audiences, who listened with rapt attention to its high-flown language and somewhat sickly sentimentalities. It belongs to the good-old-fashioned school of rhetorical tragedy, picturing only the gloomy side of human nature, admitting no stray gleam of sunshine to enliven the dreary monotony of the landscape. We doubt its popularity with modern audiences. On this occasion, however, the acting of Miss Genevieve Ward, Mr. Creswick and Mr. O. Harcourt in the principal characters secured for the play a favourable reception. Of the lady, we pay her the greatest compliment in saying that she bore comparison with older artistes, who have won hard-earned laurels in the same rôle, and left behind them a standard by which to judge all future impersonations. Mr. Creswick, as Pierre, was excellent, and Mr. O. Harcourt, as Jaffier, ably preserved the traditions of the character. The minor parts were well filled.

M. OFFENBACH's "Voyage dans la Lune," at the Alhambra, is treated as a spectacular piece, but is a lively opera-bouffe, with much sparkling music. The libretto, which is founded upon Jules Verne's marvellous story of that name, has been rendered with much skill by Mr. H. S. Leigh.

THE powerful drama, entitled "All for Her," has been transferred to the Princess's Theatre, where it is almost needless to say that Mr. John Clayton will continue to represent the part of the hero. It is to be followed by a French vaudeville, in which M.M. Didier and Schey will reappear—a rather strange medley of English and French performances.

THE DYING BOY.

You know we French stormed Ratisbon;

A mile or so away,
On a little mound Napoleon

Stood, on our storming day;

With neck out-thrust, you fancy how—

Legs wide, arms locked behind,

As if to balance the prone brow

Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans,

That soar, to earth may fall,

Let once my army-leader, Lannes,

Waver at yonder wall,"

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew

A rider, bound on bound

Full galloping; nor bridle drew

Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,

And held himself erect

By just his horse's mane, a boy;

You hardly could suspect,—

So tight he kept his lips compressed

Scarce any blood came through,—

You looked twice ere you saw his breast

Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor! by God's

grace

We've got you Ratisbon!

The marshal's in the market-place,

And you'll be there auon

To see your flag bird flap his vans

Where I, to heart's desire,

Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed:

his plans

Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently

Softened itself as sheathes

A film the mother eagle's eye,

When her braised eaglet breathes.

"You're wounded!" "Nay," his soldier's

pride

Touched to the quick, he said,

"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,

Smiling the boy fell dead. R. B.



[A SCENE IN MERCIER'S STORY.]

UNDINE; OR, THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF THE RHINE.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR MORTON had not yet seen the lady of the house. While he remained weak and listless he resolutely put all thoughts of her away.

When, however, returning strength prompted the restless wish to escape from the monotony of his chamber he began nervously to discuss the question.

He sent for Mrs. Owen at the very moment the young people were entering the house of the fortune-teller, and smilingly begged of her to talk to him and beguile his weariness.

This request, as might be surmised, effectually closed her mouth. She sat silent, vexed with herself that she seemed so utterly destitute of entertaining topics of conversation.

Perceiving that he was not in the way to obtain his desired information, Sir Morton began to question her.

"Where are Guy and Edith, and Ralph too? Have they all left you? I am afraid you are neglected and are miserably dull. I think, my dear Hester, we shall appreciate Mordaunt Cliff if we ever return to it."

"I have no doubt of that. But, indeed, I am very pleasantly situated here. We were very fortunate in finding a house so comfortable and so much like an English one. And a hostess too able to speak our language. She is an extremely lovely woman; is Madame D'Almanoff. I am much interested in her, and have found ample entertainment in her society."

"She is a widow, I suppose, as I have heard nothing of a husband."

"I judge so. She has not alluded to her personal affairs in any way."

"What sort of an appearance has she? you know I have not seen her yet, though Peter tells me she came to the chamber when I was at the worst."

"You saw the daughter, did you not? Madame D'Almanoff is very like her, only as Irena would be after having passed through years of suffering also. Yet Irena has a look I never see upon her mother's face—it puzzles me, it is so natural and familiar, though I can't trace it."

He turned his face away suddenly, and was a long time lost in silence.

"Presently he said, slowly.

"D'Almanoff! I have heard the name before, ere in Cologne. Possibly I may have met her in

my young days. But then she would have spoken of it. She never has in any way suggested remembering our name, has she?"

"Oh, no," returned Mrs. Owen, promptly. "I fancy she has lived in strict retirement."

Sir Morton laughed lightly.

"And then I have changed so. No one would think of recognizing me who saw me last in my prime, I've changed a good deal since then—oh, Hester!"

"Not more than other people, and your features are so peculiar they would still identify you."

He shifted his position uneasily, and again dropped into one of his deep reveries.

"The young people seem to bear our ill luck very cheerfully," observed Mrs. Owen, by way of breaking the uncomfortable silence.

He looked up quickly.

"Oh, yes! I've been thinking it over to-day. I wish they were married already. Do you think Edith would mind doing without the usual fuss and display? As I am her guardian as well as Guy's, I could have the affair over in a little time. Just the needful formalities and the presence of our consul, and the thing is done. It would be a great relief to me. Since our numberless mishaps I have an uncomfortable feeling at times of other contingencies at hand. Yes, it seems to me it would make another man of me to see them safely married. What do you think about it, Hester?" asked he, with feverish eagerness.

"I am somewhat taken by surprise. As for the marriage, it has been so looked forward to, that it can make very little difference, I should imagine. As regards the gaity incident thereto—which it is natural young people should enjoy—why the bridal festivities can take place just the same on their return."

"And you think Edith will consent?"

"I certainly do, especially when she knows how earnestly you desire it."

"Then I'll have it over before another week," exclaimed he.

Mrs. Owen smiled at his eagerness.

"You will have to recruit your strength very rapidly to be a very cheerful wedding guest. Those pale cheeks will dampen our spirits."

"Never fear for me. You'll see how I shall gain after the affair is off my mind. We will go back to England—from which such home-loving people never ought to have stirred—and the bride and bridegroom may act their own pleasure."

He rubbed his hands gleefully and went tottering feebly up and down the room.

"I wish you'd speak to them when they come home; I own how childish I am, but the moment a

thing is determined on I have no rest till it is accomplished. You'll speak to them, Hester?"

"Certainly, if you wish me to."

"And send Guy at once to me."

Mrs. Owen went away considerably amused at the new phase of affairs, and yet after all approving of the movement.

Her old anxiety had been set at rest by the cheerful looks of all the party, and in the house they could not pair off as they so naturally did when they sauntered out upon their walks. Her chief anxiety had been for Ralph, for whom she had dreaded the horrors of unrequited affection, but since they had taken up their residence with the D'Almanoffs she had, womanlike, planned a new romance wherein the beautiful and graceful Irena was to heal all the troubles of Ralph and crown his life with happiness.

She watched eagerly at the window for their approach, and marvelled little at their prolonged absence.

She sat more than an hour waiting for them before either appeared. Then she saw Guy and Irena slowly turning up the avenue.

"It is an accident. That giddy Ralph has stopped Edie to tease her, as he dares not the more beloved Irena," murmured Mrs. Owen.

But when Ralph and his pretty companion came in sight there was no sign of sportiveness in their serious faces. Edith was looking up in his eyes rather more trustfully than the occasion seemed to warrant, and his vehement gestures somehow alarmed his affectionate aunt.

"She rose to greet them as they entered together, the four faces somehow lacking the usual careless look of cheerful glee.

"Well, children, you've loitered famously to-day," said Aunt Hester, tremulous with a disagreeable suspicion that fairly appalled her. "I've been watching for you a long time."

"Anything particular you wanted of us?" asked Guy. "I trust my father is not ill again?"

"Oh, no, he's unusually strong this morning—quite himself again. You will judge so when I tell you he has been planning a wedding."

Her voice faltered a little and she looked anxiously from one startled face to another.

"Whose wedding?" she asked.

"Why, yours and Edie's of course," answered the worthy woman, her misgivings growing stronger.

"Oh, Ralph!" exclaimed Edith, in a sharp tone of a quip, as she flew to Ralph's side.

The young man folded his arm around her and gazed up into his aunt's face with defiant eyes.

"Edith, Ralph! what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Owen.

Edith hid her face on Ralph's shoulder and began to weep.

"Guy, Guy," exclaimed the poor aunt, turning to him appealingly, "what will you think of Edith?"

"That the poor child is not in the least to blame, dear Aunt Hester; I am equally guilty."

"You, Guy! Heaven help me, have I lost my wife?"

Guy had turned with that wondrously thrilling smile of his, and gently drawn Irana's passive hand into his.

"Children! children! what have you been doing?" exclaimed Aunt Hester, frantically.

"Learning that the heart has stronger claims than the will of parents. Aunt Hester, Edie and I love each other very dearly as friends and relatives, but we are sure we shall be miserable if we are compelled to fulfil that old engagement. Are we not, Edith?"

"Yes, yes! oh, thank you, Guy, for speaking for me, but I cannot marry you, I will not marry you."

Aunt Hester wrung her hands.

"Have I been so blind! Oh, what will your father say to me. Go to your father, Guy, with this story. I am sure that I dare not."

Guy turned a little paler.

"I will go, but will it do to agitate him now? Is there no way I can postpone this discussion till he is stronger?"

"I am sure I cannot tell. He is resolute upon having this marriage take place at once. He has sent Peter twice to see if you had not returned. Oh, dear! well might he say he had premonitions of other ills to happen."

Irana had not spoken.

Her face had flushed scarlet, and then grown intensely pale. She crossed now to Mrs. Owen's side and said, proudly:

"Mrs. Owen is angry with me. I do not deserve it. I have sought to avoid him until I knew that Edith had better love for another, and even then, Guy will tell you, I have been chary of a word of encouragement. I knew the obscure German girl would be haughtily rejected by the proud English Mordaunts."

"Nay, nay, my child! had it only been Ralph I should have heartily rejoiced. Perverse children! why could you not follow our wishes?"

"And why should not our friends sanction our heart elections?" exclaimed Ralph. "I have no title to be sure, but my fortune is ample for Edith's support in her usual luxury. Guy will not need a dowry with his bride. It is you who are perverse not to rejoice in what would make us all so happy."

"It matters very little to me, Ralph, but I am afraid it will kill Sir Morton. I am afraid he will never yield, and he is Edith's guardian, you know."

Edith sobbed again.

"What a deplorable dilemma," repeated Ralph, impatiently, "confound that fortune teller, to predict such wonderful things just on the eve of our total discomfiture."

"The fortune-teller! Ah, Undine, what was it she said? She is our only hope, I am sure. I have abundant faith in her. I would she were here," exclaimed Guy, pausing from his distracted walk up and down the room.

"I know how to bring her," whispered Irana. Shall I do it, Guy?

"By all means. She promised to convert my father to our theory, if I remember rightly. We certainly need her help. Not that any threats or wrath shall compel me to leave my Undine, but the inevitable and fearful anger of my father would lie heavily on my conscience all my life long."

"There is Peter coming again," exclaimed Mrs. Owen, in consternation. "Guy, you must really go to him." What will you do?

Guy whispered earnestly to Irana:

"Send for the fortune-teller at once," and hurried up the stairs to meet Peter.

"Master is very anxious for you to come to his chamber, Mr. Guy. He's much better to day, but feels rather nervous, I think; he's been so impatient about your coming."

Which Guy interpreted as a gentle hint for him to look out for a tolerable sharp reprimand.

His anticipations of the coming interview were certainly of no very agreeable nature as he unlosed his father's door and walked into the room.

"Well, Guy, you don't say you're really come back at last? I can't conceive what you find to interest you so long in this miserable little town," was spoken querulously, as the arm-chair was wheeled about and the worn, perturbed face of the invalid was turned toward him.

"We have been over to Dents, and we lingered on the way home, I confess. How do you find yourself this afternoon, sir?"

"About the same. But I shall be better shortly. I shall start for England the moment I can bear a long ride. Meantime, as I suppose Mrs. Owen has

told you, I have decided to have the wedding take place here."

"You mean Edith's and mine?" said Guy. How hard and dry the words seemed as they passed his lips.

"I wish it could!" said poor Guy.

"I don't understand you," was the dry response. Guy faced around after two or three desperate chokings at the throat.

"Dear father, I know you love me. I am sure you desire only my truest happiness—"

He could not go on for the daw which blinded his eyes and the tremor which shook his voice.

"Of course I do, boy, what then?" was the sharp rejoinder.

"It would be a great favour to me if this subject were dropped for a month or so."

"A month or so? Good Heavens! the suspense would send me to my grave in that time. Guy, it is in my turn to put the same question; if you love your father, if you would give him his only chance of peace and quiet, you will have your marriage taken place as soon as possible."

"My marriage with IRANA? Oh, father, that would be life-long misery for Edith and for me too."

"What do you mean?" fairly screamed Sir Morton, springing to his feet and gazing furiously upon his son.

"Edith does not love me, father; but her noble heart is given to Ralph."

"To Ralph—the dastardly villain; taking advantage to steal away an heiress during the illness of her guardian. But it will not avail him. She cannot marry without my consent. She must fulfil the old engagement."

"But she will be miserable."

"I cannot help it. Why, she was always willing. It is a foolish story. Send the girl to me."

"Whether or not, what I tell you is perfectly true. Edith is weeping desolately now, from the news of this intended marriage."

"Has Mrs. Owen cheated me too?" cried Sir Morton, furiously.

"No, no, she was as astounded and grieved as you can be. It is very unfortunate, but we are none of us to blame. The heart has its own laws, my father, written in indisputable characters by the Creator's hand."

"Nonsense! the girl is of a pliable disposition. She will forget it all in a week. The bridal transcean will drive all unhappy thoughts from her head."

"But for me, what shall I do?" demanded Guy, sorrowfully.

"In the name of the furies, what will trouble you, Guy?"

"I do not love Edith, and I love some one else."

A wild imprecation foamed over Sir Morton's pale lips.

"Am I bewitched? what has changed you all? Oh, this accursed Cologne! I shall go mad if I remain much longer. Whom do you love, I desire to ask?" he went on, in a fierce, sneering tone.

Guy dared not add to his furious excitement by naming the obscure, portionless daughter of their landlady.

"It is a German lady I have met since you have been ill."

Sir Morton, with eyes gleaming like coals of fire, leaned forward and seized Guy's hand in his clammy fingers.

"Guy, if you do not marry Edith you are ruined. You have been brought up to luxury and great expectation. I tell you they may melt away at a moment's warning. With Edith's fortune you will be safe from poverty. You understand now, foolish boy, why I am so anxious. Go, torment me no more."

"You have given me an additional reason for refusing to fulfil the uncongenial engagement. Shall I wrong the poor girl so much? Shall I marry her to obtain her fortune without giving even a heart in return? No, no; you are ill and over-excited or you would never ask it, my father."

"But I do ask it and insist upon it, and your father's curse shall rest upon you, Guy, unless—"

"Hold!" said a sternly calm voice from the doorway.

Father and son turned simultaneously.

The Fortune-teller of the Rhine stood there, her black eyes gleaming brightly, her raven braids falling heavily from the weird, scarlet hood, her outstretched arm pointing into Sir Morton's quailing face.

CHAPTER XIII.

REVOKE your curses, Morton Mordaunt, lest they fall upon your own head," said the clear, ringing voice.

"Who are you—whence came you?" demanded Sir Morton, while Guy stood marvelling at the

promptness with which the strange woman had responded to Irana's summons.

"I am the Sybil of the Rhine. She who foretold that the blue-eyed Edith should marry the man of her choice, Ralph Owen; who promised Guy Mordaunt that he should win for his bride the pure and noble maiden who has won his heart."

"You have wrought all this mischief, then! the furies make you! But you shall see the lie given to your false prophecy. Guy shall marry Edith. In defiance of you all, I declare it."

"I have come to prove my words!" continued she, calmly. "Morton Mordaunt, you and I have met before."

"I know it," cried Sir Morton, fiercely; "upon that wretched steamer."

"We have met in the years far gone, here by the Rhine, as now, Morton Mordaunt."

He began to shiver, and convulsively seized Guy's hand.

The latter hastily wheeled forward the easy chair, and Sir Morton sank into it.

"You came not alone to the Rhine alone. Ah! the grave, years and years gone, has closed over the form of your companion. He sleeps quietly perchance beneath your proud English tomb in his ancestral home, and perhaps his unquiet spirit keeps watch with us here, this moment."

Her voice sank to a low, thrilling, hoarse whisper.

The cold shills ran through Guy's frame—on wester, then, Sir Morton leaned back with a face as ghastly as that of a corpse.

Guy made a hasty motion for her to pause, but she gave him no heed.

"Morton Mordaunt, who would not rather be the dead Guy than the dastardly usurper of his name and honour, living in honour and splendour though he may be."

"Guy, Guy, turn her out; she is crazed, she speaks falsely—I will not hear her!" shrieked Sir Morton.

"Hold!" cried the woman, sternly. "I have come to give your tortured soul peace. Answer me, Morton Mordaunt, in all these long years of prosperity, respected by your neighbours, beloved by your family, high in the favour of all men, have you known happiness?"

"No, no!" moaned Sir Morton.

"Your guilty secret has eaten day and night at your tortured heart. I have known it—I have seen it—I exulted once, poor wretch! I only pity now. I have come to give you peace."

Her solemn voice carried conviction with it.

Guy stood like a statue, never moving his eyes from her face. His father, pressing both hands tightly against his breast, leaned forward breathlessly.

"It is impossible!" moaned he.

"Strange," ejaculated she, "that the wily spirit continually at work to form new barriers against the final retribution, should have overlooked the simple and only successful action which could palliate your sin! I repeat that there is one way in which you can find peace."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Sir Morton, once more rising passionately from his chair.

"My name was once Merrie Kerne" answered the woman.

Sir Morton dropped back as if he had been shot.

"I have a story to tell, but it must be heard by all interested. Sir Morton, as you hope for future peace, hinder me not."

She opened the door and called in a calm voice of authority:

"Hilda, summon all the English people hither and come yourself with your daughter."

A low sob and unsteady step was heard without. In a few moments, with serious, anxious faces, they came forward.

Edith was still weeping, but Irana was sternly composed, although marble pale.

The others seated themselves; but Irana, crossing to her mother's side, stood with one arm thrown protectingly around her, while just before them loomed the tall, majestic figure of the fortune-teller.

The three formed a grand group. The stern, powerful figure of the mysterious sybil, with her strongly-marked features and brilliant, piercing eyes, the graceful, ladylike and still fine-looking mother in her Zenobia-like beauty, as majestically mournful; and the lovely, girlish daughter, her truthful, loving eyes fixed in tender solicitude upon Madame D'Almanoff's agitated face.

All eyes, even those of the trembling, cowering baronet, were fixed upon the two.

"I have a story to tell, and since there is not one here but has a vital interest in it, I have summoned you all for listeners," began the sybil, "and because it fall upon most of you, I shall give it in detail and in my own way."

"Twenty-three years ago here by the Rhine lived together two orphaned sisters born of an Italian

mother and an English father. They were able to earn all required for their simple wants by a light and congenial employment. The one embroidered with the needle, the other with the brush, and never were birds or butterflies more gay of voice, more light of heart. Their parents had been so long dead their loss was scarcely known, and it was a sweet thought for them as they knelt before retiring to their innocent couch, that up in the shining heavens two blessed angels kept guard over their earthly path. They believed it then, in the trustiness and guilelessness of girlish faith.

Bitter experience taught them how the blessed ones stoop not down from their songs of praise to the low plains of sinful earth, even to avert the wrongs of the innocent.

"I said they were happy. Ah me! the word seems too tame and spiritless to express that Eden-like experience. They were all in all to each other—father, mother, sister, lover, was the one for the other. Would that it had never been disturbed."

She paused and lifted her shining eyes to Madame D'Almanoff's face.

The tears were pouring over it.

"You are right, Mercie—it was an Eden," murmured she.

"Aye, and the serpent came," replied the sybil, turning her dark eyes upon the spell-bound baroness.

"A young Englishman, noble in birth, handsome and gallant, and it seemed of a soul grand and knightly enough to adorn his faultless person, came to their simple home. It was for some trivial reason at first. An illuminated book executed by the sister who used the brush had met his appreciation. He wished to procure another to add to a beloved sister in his English home. It was to be created from designs of his own, and scenes upon the Rhine. He came constantly, therefore, to overlook the work. Cologne was the frontispiece."

A low murmur from Mrs. Owen startled her.

"My book—the gem my long-lost Guy sent to me."

The sybil smiled meaningfully.

"And while one sister worked with her brush under the nobleman's eye, the other sat near, and dainty wreaths of silken blossoms bloomed beneath her skilful needle, and conversation flowed free and easy, and neither innocent heart dreamed of evil. If there was fault, it belonged to the painter—the elder she was, and had taken the lead, having received more of their father's resolute, sturdy independence of spirit than her more delicate and gentler sister. Heaven knows no hint of the danger ever occurred to her."

A low, quivering sigh shook Madame D'Almanoff's breast, and a thrill in every heart there responded, but the speaker went on, calmly:

"The book was finished, and yet the visits of the young Englishman did not cease. There were various excuses. Now he brought a rare flower for the embroideress to copy, or a gem of art for the painter's portfolio. Again it was a new poem, and as his richly modulated voice flowed in the melodious measures, the sisters smiled at each other for very ecstasy of joy."

Mrs. Owen had grown sadder and sadder.

"Oh, my Guy, after this long silence in the grave, am I to learn that the soul I believed so pure, was soiled by the guilt of disturbing innocence like that?" spoke she, quite unaware that her thoughts were expressed aloud.

"He never spoke a disrespectful word. His behaviour would have become the brightest soul that ever lived. Was it strange, then, these innocent creatures dreamed not of harm? Their minds seemed to expand beneath his touch; their entered lofior domes of thought; grander music flowed into their lives for knowing him. And yet it had been better for them both had they died and never heard his name nor seen his face."

"Oh Guy, Guy!" moaned Mrs. Owen.

The sybil flung to her a grateful glance.

"They grew to watch for his coming. If aught delayed him their smiles faded, their eyes drooped, their hearts sank—and yet neither knew the meaning."

"But they were seldom tried. He seemed as strongly attracted to their simple home as it was glorified by his presence.

He took them to delicious rides afar into the cool shadows of the country groves. They went dancing down the Rhine with him in his fairy sailboat. They had a sweetly solemn walk through the old cathedral by his side, beneath the shining stars and in the silvery effulgence of the moonlight. With all things bright and beautiful and grand, was he associated to those simple souls, who had no worldly friends to speak warmly, and, as I have said, the angels above bent not down from their song of praise.

"To one of them came speedily the rude shock which roused her from the dream of enchantment. He came one day with a glad light shining in his

eyes, and bending down to the palette of the painter with his handsome face all aglow with eagerness, he said, in his playful way:

"Artist Mercie, I have come to ask something of you; will you give it to me?"

"Anything—to the half of my kingdom."

"It is just that, Mercie, the fairest half. I want the tender hand yonder, to call forth with its magical touch, just such beautiful flowers, such delicious roses upon the pattern of my life. Will you give to me for my life's angel the dear Hilda yonder, who has owned at last that my fervent love is returned?"

"So he spoke. You see not a word was forgotten. This Mercie—this artist, felt her heart give one wild leap, and sink back like a lump of lead; the blood sively crept like ice through her veins—there was a wild tumult buzzing in her ears. But she was terribly resolute, and proud as any English duchess. She forced her stiffening lips to answer with a sound which counterfeited gladness:

"You shall have her, Guy, with her sister's choicest blessing."

She heard his joyous thanks, felt his brotherly kiss, with the fervent, "Heaven bless my sister Mercie," and was glad to creep away and leave them to their lovers' bliss. Wildly and fiercely she wrestled with the bitter anguish of her own heart, and she conquered. She returned to them calm and cheerful; but her youth and girlishness had dropped away from her for ever."

"Mercie, Mercie! oh, my angel, how could you have concealed it from me all these years?" cried Madame D'Almanoff, seizing the sybil's hand.

She smiled proudly.

"It was better so, Hilda; to-day, I am no longer ashamed of it."

There were other tears than those on Madame D'Almanoff's cheek, but Sir Morton still sat grimly stern and pale, with glassy, unwinking eyes fixed on the speaker's face.

"It was here the chief, the only fault of Mercie lay. She was so wretched with her own struggles, she gave no thought to her sister's welfare. She made no inquiries; she avoided the lovers as much as possible, and wandered restlessly from her home. She might have made sure of the circumstances. As she was the elder, and the stronger, it was clearly her duty. But she did not. She encouraged the speedy marriage—she hoped then her pain might cease. There was no one to mind or gainsay his movements, Guy said. He would take his beautiful foreign rose to the friends at home all unexpectedly, that they might be the more surprised and delighted.

"Unscrupulous in the world's hardness and selfishness, neither of the sisters thought it strange an English baronet was willing to marry a portionless maid of the Rhine. He loved her; she was good, and true, and beautiful—there was nothing strange in it to Mercie.

"Well, the union took place—"

Sir Morton started up, and then fell back again with a wistful smile.

"I will hear you out," he muttered.

"It was where," responded she.

"A happy three months followed. They travelled awhile in Italy—wonderfully beautiful experiences dawnd upon them, I doubt not—and they came back to Mercie. They had come for a farewell visit, and then were to leave for England. But they had been with her but a single day, when Guy dropped, and complained of a fiery thirst and a fierce pain in his head. His cheeks grew hot beneath the fever flush, his eyes wild with delirium.

"He had somehow imbued the malaria of a deadly fever. Can I depict the anguish of the wife, the horror and grief of her sister? No, leave it untold! He had found an English relative at Rome, who had travelled with them to Cologne. This man tended him faithfully, was with him at Guy's request alone, in the brief hour before his death, when he rallied from delirium and knew the fate upon him.

"He died—Sir Guy Mordaunt died—"

Her voice choked and she dashed her hand swiftly across her eyes.

"None others except Sir Morton's were clear from blinding tears, while Mrs. Owen and Madame D'Almanoff sobbed aloud.

"It was a woeful, woeful time. It seemed there could be no further misery, and yet the blow which fell made that of death seem blessed.

"This English relative, this cousin, came to Mercie after the funeral with a strangely disturbed face—deeply embarrassed, too, so that she was long in gathering his meaning from his stumbling sentences—his cautious hints, his half avowals. When it came she reeled beneath the shock. The pure, the noble, the knightly Guy, he who had just been set up by their fond belief among the saints in the white light of Heaven, was a villain, a perjured wretch, a base deceiver.

"He said he was deeply distressed; his indignation at his cousin's conduct overpowered him; but he was powerless to save us from the misery. It was a great misfortune that we had no father to investigate the proceedings. The marriage had been a mere sham. Guy had explained to him how he cheated us, and begged to stone to us by a regular pension. Much more he said, but I cannot explain it all, for you all know it was so. It was the grief of a shocked and virtuous mind, powerless to save us from the ruin threatening. At first we indignantly refused to believe the atrocious story. My sister, with an energy I had not believed left from her overpowering grief, flew to obtain proofs. The marriage certificate was gone, all the necessary papers were lacking. She remembered how carefully Guy had gathered them together, and I saw her cheek blanch. Next we sought the English clergyman who had performed the ceremony. No one knew anything about such a man; he was not to be found. We came home and sat down dumb, staring at each other's faces. We could doubt no longer. I knew when Hilda gave up her last hope.

"She fell suddenly into my arms, and in a voice which chilled my blood as if it had been spoken through rows of buried coffins, cried out:

"Oh, Mercie, my poor, nameless, unborn child! I took her in my arms, and kissed her frantically. I will be its father, Hilda, it shall never want for food or tenderness; it shall never lack comforts while these hands of mine can earn a single coin. Let us be courageous, and defy this cruel fate."

"We spurned the offered money, though we had no ill feelings towards this cousin who seemed to feel so keenly for our disgrace and suffering. And he went away and left us.

"The child we thought to be such a heavy grief was our chief blessing. Beside the mother's couch I fell down, and took my solemn vow to take the guilty father's place, and if opportunity ever came, to gain for it the rights, by the laws of Heaven if not by earth, it would surely claim. I took a new votation. The sight of the brush made me sick. It was too full of Guy's memory. My bitterness of heart—my sternness of will came to my help. I became the fortune-teller of the Rhine. Natural showiness and quickness aided me wonderfully. It was my most lucrative employment, and I was able to keep a well-furnished home for my sister and her child.

"The years rolled on, the child grew in beauty and filled our hearts with their sole joy. Yet still the terrible bitterness of my shattered faith in any human goodness rankled in my heart.

"One day, accidentally, I came upon an English paper. I learned in it that the pitying cousin had become Guy's successor, wore his title, owned his estate. It sent a wild suspicion like an electric shock through my brain. I kept it from Hilda; it would have been pitiless cruelty to have told it without a word of proof, but I gloated over it—I fed upon it—I grew convinced that it was true. I was no longer an innocent, unsuspecting girl. I was a stoned, distrustful woman. I could believe wicked deeds of any one. I sent an agent to England to spy his movements, his actions, and the accounts I received confirmed my suspicions.

"The new baronet was a strange man, restless, excitable: he always seemed as if a ghost was dodging his steps."

"So answered my spy. I did not doubt it. A ghost was always with him."

Sir Morton shuddered.

"I went myself to England. In a dozen different disguises I dodged his steps. I even bribed a servant to allow me to search his papers through. All in vain, and sulken and discontented I returned home. My task seemed hopeless—I relinquished it for eighteen years. Six months ago I took it up again.

"Our child had grown to womanhood. There was another way she might gain her rights, and her father's name. I myself, sent to Guy, yonder, that fascinating treatise upon the Rhine. I was confident it would draw him hither. For the rest I trusted my fortune-teller's powers. Providence aided me beyond my wildest hopes when at last you all came to the Rhine.

"I had patiently followed your course from the moment of leaving the English shore. I was ready for you on the steamer, as you know. Little enough did I dream of the after piece which followed when I left the wharf, and my precious one remained upon the boat, all unsuspecting of the hope I held that Guy would see her face among the crowd, and be attracted toward it. The Rhine did better than I could have planned."

She spoke these words emphatically, only Guy and his Undine understood the hidden meaning.

"Well, what more shall I say? only this: Sir Morton Mordaunt; for years I suspected the base falsehood you framed, the hideous wrong you put upon a dead man's fair fame, but it was only suspicion. To-day I can do better. I can prove it!"

Sir Morton leaped to his feet. One hand was pressed against the packet which was suspended to his neck.

"I defy you," shouted he, "you have no proofs!"

"Pause, sinful man. Have you not already tasted the bitter fruits of guilt? Will you hug the gnawing foe to your breast a little longer?"

That cold glittering smile played lightly across her face as she added:

"You think you have the papers safe? Have you examined them since your illness? The fortuneteller has learned many arts. She is a nurse, when it suits her. She watched your delirious bed faithfully, but she obtained her reward. She removed the precious certificates of her sister's marriage, the legitimacy of her child, and the blessed proof of Guy's truth. The paper signed by his dying hand, proclaiming to his friends the sacredness and legality of his marriage, was among them. I marvelled you had not destroyed them, until by your delirious ravings I learned that poor Guy with his last breath left his curse to any one who should harm them. Your superstitions fear has been our safety. To all present here I declare the true heir, the rightful owner of Mordaunt Cliff, is Lady Irena Mordaunt, Six Guy Mordaunt's lawful daughter."

Sir Morton sprang to his feet once more, tore frantically the packet from his chain, and with a groan of despair, dropped back again.

The fortune-teller bounded to his side.

"Peace, man, you are safe. We cannot curse you who are the father of Guy, who will be the husband of Irena. Are you so dull you cannot see the safe and joyful issue?"

"And you will not expose me?"

"Certainly not, nor hate you. Since fate has ordered such a happy adjustment of the united claims, what matter if it is Sir Guy or my Lady Irena who owns the Cliff, if the marriage vow has made them one?"

The tears came pouring over Sir Morton's ashy cheeks.

"Oh, I am a guilty wretch, I do not deserve it. But the temptation was terribly powerful. I was poor, already married, and with no hopes of advancement. This foreign wife, I reasoned, would be extremely unwelcome to the friends. She was as well here as there. And Guy himself suggested the thought when he put the proofs of the marriage in my hand and bade me see that no one tried to dispute their claim. Heaven forgive me; but for my son's sake I should long ago have confessed all. Heaven pardon me!"

"Amen!" said the fortune-teller, solemnly.

(To be continued.)

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BUT the Lady Georgina Charteris did not note the agitation of her hostess, nor did she hear the whispered questioning that fell from her lips. The girl, sullen still, was staring from the window after the retreating figure of her father upon the avenue. Her good nature, which had once seemed habitual, often yielded to sullenness in these days. Prosperity had not had a beneficial effect upon her. Miss Norreys had ample time to indulge in her singular emotion and to conquer it anew, before Georgina turned towards her with something of recovered amiability.

"Am I to go to Marian now?" asked Georgina, secretly desiring to see more of the house of which lately she had heard so much.

"Not just yet, my dear," said Miss Norreys. "I should like to make your better acquaintance, Lady Georgina, since you are to be my guest for a day or two. Permit me to place a chair for you."

She did so, seating her guest in such a manner as to keep her own face in shadow. The Lady Georgina, flattered and pleased, signified her pleasure in making the "better acquaintance" of her hostess.

"Since my arrival at Beechmont," said Miss Norreys, quietly, "I have made many acquaintances, the country people having received me with great cordiality. I am sorry not to have met your father and yourself until to-day, Lady Georgina. Will you tell me something about yourself?" and she smiled winningly, regarding the girl with a flattering interest. "Are you an only child, my dear?"

The Lady Georgina replied with alacrity.

"Yes, I am an only child," she exclaimed, "and I am the heiress apparent to Dunholm Castle and manor, and to my father's title. If my father should not marry again, I shall be Marchioness of Darkwood in my own right."

"You have a noble destiny before you, Lady Georgina," said Miss Norreys, moving a little nearer to

the fire and holding a hand-screen before her face. "Has your father long been in possession of his present title?"

"Only some six or eight months," answered the Lady Georgina.

There was a brief pause. One looking at the pale, olive face shadowed by the hand-screen would have thought that Miss Norreys dared hardly ask the next question that arose to her lips. But presently she said—and her tone seemed careless:

"Who and what was your father before he became Lord Darkwood, my dear? Pardon my curiosity, but I have spent so many years in India that I know very little of the great families of England, and I would like to know well my nearest neighbours."

"Oh! certainly," said Georgina, delighted with the opportunity of talking of herself and her family. "My father was formerly Captain Tollish of Her Majesty's army. I was Miss Tollish, you know."

As the former name of Lord Darkwood fell from his daughter's lips, Miss Norreys started.

In spite of her great self-control, in spite of the fact that she had expected to hear that name, its very sound caused her a renewal of that fierce and terrible agitation that the sight of him had aroused in her. The screen shook in her hand; her face was drawn and white; a tortured look flared from her dusky eyes.

Georgina was too dull and stolid, too absorbed in herself, to heed these signs of an uncontrollable emotion, and to make deductions therefrom.

"Captain Tollish!" repeated Miss Norreys, in a voice that was strangely roughened and sharpened. "Whom did he succeed? The old lord—his uncle?"

"You know of the family, then?" cried Georgina. "You know that the old lord was his uncle?"

"Every patriotic Briton studies Burke's Peerage," replied Miss Norreys. "I knew, years ago, that there was a Lord Darkwood, and that he was old. So he is dead?"

"He died ten years ago," answered Georgina. "He was a haughty old lord, and he hated my father and my grandfather, because my grandfather changed his family name of Charteris to Tollish, his wife's name. He was terribly proud, was the old marquis!"

"Who succeeded him?" asked Miss Norreys, almost in a whisper.

"His son, Edward Charteris."

There was another dead silence. Miss Norreys's face gleamed white and tortured behind her hand-screen. Yet she presently spoke again with an assumed indifference that passed for real:

"And your father, Captain Tollish, succeeded, not the old lord, but the old lord's son, Edward Charteris? Tell me something of him, Lady Georgina. Was Edward Charteris married? When and how did he die?"

She held her breath in her anxiety and suspense for the answer.

It came carelessly enough, yet every word pierced the listener's heart like the thrust of a hot Damascus blade.

"The last Lord Darkwood was a bachelor," said the Lady Georgina. "He held his title for ten years, and was a grave, reserved man, the castle servants say, who looked after his tenancy, and was adored by his dependents, but who cared nothing for society. He hated women as badly as he hated my father. You see that he and my father were friends in their younger days, but they had a frightful quarrel and became bitterest enemies. The late lord was fond of yachting, and came to his death last year by being wrecked in the Mediterranean. So, as he was dead, leaving no heir, my father succeeded to him!"

"Wrecked! Lost at sea?"

How strange that sweet, low voice sounded.

"Yes," assented Georgina. "He was lost in the yacht 'Sylphide.' The account was in all the newspapers at the time."

"I was then on my way home from India. I did not see the newspapers. I never even knew that Edward Charteris had become Lord Darkwood!"

There was a thrill of anguish in those tones that even Georgina noticed now.

She showed her surprise in every feature of her round, Dutch face.

"Did you know Edward Charteris, Miss Norreys?" she cried.

"I? I know him? How could I know him?" said Miss Norreys, more calmly, holding in her emotion with an iron hand. "Why, my dear, I have spent more than half my life in India. Had it not been for papa's death, and his desire that I should return to my native land and find a home, I should have spent all my life out there."

"My question was very foolish," admitted Georgina. "You can't be over twenty-five at the outside, Miss Norreys, and you spent more than half

your life in India, so how could you have known Lord Darkwood? For he never went to India, I am sure. I beg your pardon for my allusion to your age. I fancied that you spoke, you know, as if you had known something of the Charteris family."

"The late Lord Darkwood never married," said Miss Norreys, more to herself than to her guest. "He lived alone, and he perished at sea in a storm. Strange life and death!"

"Yes, they were strange."

"I found the cards of Lord Darkwood and the Lady Georgina Charteris one day upon my return from a drive," said Miss Norreys. "I had heard something of the family, and I suppose Lord Darkwood to be that lord who has just died, and I supposed you to be his daughter. I had not positively known of the old lord's death, but I knew his age, and deemed his death probable, and thought that his son had succeeded him."

"Ay, yes, she had thought all this, and had feared and dreaded to meet Lord Darkwood, even while she felt a strange eagerness and longing to look upon his face!

She had called at Dunholm Castle in that same fear and dread and longing, and the news of the late lord's death had come upon her in an awful shock. The sight of the present lord's face had been an equal shock, and the two together were almost more than she could bear.

"I should have thought that you would have been glad to leave India, Miss Norreys," said Georgina. "I wouldn't live there for a mint of money."

"It was my home," replied Miss Norreys, simply. "My father and my friends were all there. I wish I had never left it." And her tone grew suddenly passionate and as suddenly calmed again. "Excuse me, my dear, I fear I have fatigued you. Allow me to show you a room where you can lie down and rest after this morning's excitement. But first—you have not spoken of your mother. Is there no Lady Darkwood?"

"No, my mother died years ago. There has been no Lady Darkwood in many years. The old lord's wife died young. The late lord, his son, never married. I hope there will be no Lady Darkwood until I come into the title."

Miss Norreys laid down her screen, arose, and courteously requested the girl to accompany her. They proceeded up the grand staircase, with its frequent landings, its niched statuary, its carved balustrade, to the upper hall. The hostess led her guest to a room at its farther end, a pretty parlour overlooking the beautiful gardens.

Adjoining the parlour were bedroom, bath, and dressing-room.

"I hope you will make yourself comfortable here, Lady Georgina," said Miss Norreys. "Your maid and your box will be sent up as soon as they arrive. My house and servants are at your disposal, so pray call for anything you may desire."

The hostess, with a smile, withdrew, proceedings to her own apartments.

The bed-chamber was occupied by Gwae. Miss Norreys passed into her sitting-room, and locked her doors.

Alone, her forced calmness forsook her. She fell upon her knees by a couch and gave way to such a storm of anguish and despair as could only have come from a passionate soul in utter extremity of suffering.

"God help me!" she moaned pitifully. "God pity me! What shall I do? Oh, the bitterness of death has come in life! If I could die! If I could only die!"

The tears poured down her cheeks in a wild rain. Not for years had she wept like this—not even when her indulgent, loving father had died a year or two before in India!

She gave herself up to an utter abandonment of grief, and lay at last, weak and spent, and almost lifeless, upon the carpet, looking like a dead woman.

When once more she gathered strength to marshal her thoughts, and her dark head lay against the side of the couch, and her dark eyes stared wildly and sparingly straight before her with unseeing gaze, she muttered:

"Fabian Tollish here! I wonder that I did not drop at his feet in a swoon! Strange he did not suspect that he had seen me before. Am I so changed? He looked into my eyes and did not remember them. He looked upon my features, and his memory never told him how often he had looked upon them before. Fabian Tollish here! Is it fate that brought me to his neighbourhood? Is it fate that has led our lives so near together again, after all these years?"

She lay long in that despairing attitude, thinking thoughts like these we have set down. The olive face was blanched now to a white pallor; the dark eyes were terrible in their expression of

pain and torture. The clock chimed the half-hours thrice, and she paid no heed. She was only roused at last by a knocking upon the inner door, and even then she was too utterly wearied to answer it, and Naya stole away, fancying that her mistress slept.

"I wish that I had not returned to England," murmured the lady. "I had learned a sort of patience out there; I had learned to bear my life; and now I must learn anew those lessons I believed I had learned for good and all. But how shall I meet Fabian Tollish and not betray myself? What fate brought me to his very door? Is it that I may be revenged upon him for all that he has made me suffer?"

Her noble face glowed with sudden heat. This new idea seemed utterly to take possession of her. To be revenged upon Fabian Tollish would give new flavour to her existence, would give new impulse to her energies, would be something to live for!

"That is it!" she cried. "I will be revenged upon him. He wrecked my life. Oh, that I might wreck his! He does not suspect that he once knew me. I will plan and work out a complete revenge!"

She sprang up and ran to a mirror, and contemplated her reflection with burning eyes.

Even she, without a shadow of vanity, could not help appreciating her superb and wonderful beauty. Lord Darkwood, when Fabian Tollish, had been noted as an admirer of beauty, and this dark loveliness was of the very type to win his deepest admiration.

She was thinking thus, looking upon herself as if she had been a painting, or a statue, when Naya again knocked. Miss Norreys went to the door.

The Hindoo's calm eyes detected traces of that mighty agitation in her mistress's face. Its lingering pallor, swollen eyelids, and still quivering lips, told of the great storm that had passed over her. Naya made no comment, although her mistress never sighed but that the maid's heart ached, but she advanced into the room, inquiring if she were wanted.

Miss Norreys replied in the negative, and Naya reluctantly returned to Gwen.

Before the luncheon hour, the Lady Georgina's maid and box arrived from Dunholm Castle, and the young lady occupied herself in exchanging her habit for a fresh toilet, which her father had himself selected from her wardrobe, and which was therefore in good taste.

Miss Norreys called for her guest, and conducted her to the breakfast-room where luncheon was served.

After the meal, the hostess exhibited to the Lady Georgina the conservatories, the gardens, the art-gallery, and other objects of interest, and afterwards ordered a carriage, and the two were driven through the park and over the country roads for an hour or more, returning in ample time to dress for dinner.

The hostess was constant in her attentions to the Lady Georgina, who felt for her a vivid admiration.

Lord Darkwood's daughter dressed for dinner, and Miss Norreys came down attired in a maize-coloured silk, trimmed with black lace, looking a very queen of beauty.

She interested the girl after dinner in engravings, music, and conversation, and no one could have imagined how she sickened of the girl's stupidity and inanity during all those long hours.

At nine o'clock coffee was served in the drawing-room, and at ten o'clock Miss Norreys ordered bed-room candles, and the evening was over.

The Lady Georgina retired to her chamber, and Miss Norreys, with a long sigh of relief, entered her own apartments.

The day had been pleasant, but the night was cool. Fires had not been discontinued at Beechmont, and one was now burning upon the marble hearth. Miss Norreys drew up a low chair before it, and gave herself up to thought. And the subject of her reflections was the same as it had been in the morning—Fabian Tollish, Lord Darkwood!

What was he to her? Where had she known him? In what way had his life been connected with hers? How had he incurred her hatred—how won her desire for revenge?

Evidently, there was some great mystery in the life of the beautiful Miss Norreys. What was that mystery?

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE clock chimed the hour of midnight before Miss Norreys stirred from her rapt attitude before the fire, and before she touched the bell at her elbow and summoned Naya.

The East Indian glided in, in her soft-flowing

robes of unstiffened silk, and laid out her mistress's night-robe.

Miss Norreys exchanged her evening-dress for a white cashmere wrapper, trimmed with swan's down, and resumed her seat, while Naya opened a large ebony dressing case, heavily bound in silver, and brought out brushes and combs, mounted in ivory, and ornamented with monograms in silver.

While she brushed out the long silken lengths of dusk-brown hair, she furtively glanced, now and then, at the pale, olive face, with its thoughtful look, and noted how white were the usually scarlet lips, and what dusky shadows lay underneath the great brown eyes.

"Missy is not well to-night," she said, softly. "Missy is tired with all this excitement of accident and visitors?"

"Yes, I am tired, Naya," said Miss Norreys, wearily. "How is your patient to-night?"

"She is sleeping like a baby, Missy," answered Naya. "She has wakened only once this afternoon. The doctor came in again to see her, but he said that she was doing well."

"I will look in upon her presently," said the lady. "How your touch soothes me, Naya. My head throbs in every part to-night!"

The maid brushed gently and continuously in silence. When she had finished and had coiled the dusky masses in a coronal around Miss Norreys's head, the latter arose, saying:

"Lay out my night-things, Naya, while I look in upon your patient."

She passed into the inner room, while her attendant obeyed her bidding.

The light was turned low in the bed-chamber. Its soft, yellow rays fell upon the low brass bedstead, and the girl, who was enclosed in those soft-falling curtains of white lace and rose silk.

Miss Norreys stood by the bedside and looked down upon the sleeper. The girl's hair of bronze-gold streamed in massive waves over the lace-trimmed pillow. Her pure face, Greek in its outlines, sweet and lovely as an angel's vision, was calm in its repose. The peasy-dark eyes were thinly veiled by the transparent lids. The thin red lips were slightly parted. Her night-robe, which belonged to Miss Norreys, was unbuttoned at the throat, and the lace frill fell away from the slender throat and milk-white neck. How beautiful she was! Yet even in her sleep a look of weariness was upon the young face—the shadow of a great trouble hung over her.

Miss Norreys looked upon her first in admiration, then in tenderness. She knelt down beside the bed and studied Gwen's face, feature by feature. And an infinite yearning filled the lady's soul for this tender young creature with the shadow of sorrow upon her.

"She, too, has suffered, and she is but a child!" she thought. "An orphan, doubtless; poor of course; a hired companion in Lord Darkwood's house—a companion to that vulgar, overgrown girl! Poor child!"

She stooped and kissed Gwen with a tenderness such as none but Gwen's lover had ever exhibited to her before.

"I must keep her as long as I can," thought Miss Norreys. "Matters have turned out differently from my expectations. I will not abandon my new home. I shall not be able to withdraw myself from Lord Darkwood's visits, even if I would. I will fill my house with company. I will invite young people. I will interest myself in others. Else I shall go mad with these haunting memories! I must forget myself in making others happy!"

She knelt long at that bedside, and finally returned to her dressing-room, where a bed had been prepared for her.

"Naya," said her mistress, suddenly, "I think I shall fill Beechmont with visitors. I begin to tire already of its solitude. I might go up to London for the remainder of the season, but I am in no humour for town-gaieties."

"Who would come at this season, Missy?" asked the East Indian.

"Very many people with whom I became acquainted during my stay in town, besides others whom I have long known," answered Miss Norreys. "There is Mrs. General Kenright, under whose escort I came from India nearly a year ago. She is still in England, and would be delighted to visit me. She knew papa, too, and that would be a link between us. And there are her daughters, Miss Kenright and Miss Emily, both delightful girls. And there is Colonel Warburton, who accompanied us from India. He has changed into a home-regiment, and doesn't care a fig for the London season. Besides, I fancy that he is more than half in love with Miss Kenright, and if he had a chance would ask her to marry him. And there are two acquaintances I made in London, Miss Ensor, and her brother, Sir William Ensor, who are

very agreeable, and who would gladly become members of my party. And, last of all, there is Lord Chilton. I met him often in town, and although Parliament is in session, I know he could come also."

Naya smiled.

"Lord Chilton is very handsome, Missy," she suggested. "I wish he would come."

"He is younger than I," said Miss Norreys. "I like him as a brother, and he would make a very pleasant cavalier for Miss Emily Kenright, or for Miss Ensor."

"I wish, Missy," said the East Indian, with unwonted energy, "that you would think of yourself sometimes, instead of always thinking of others. Why don't you get married? Why don't you have a title, and a husband to adore you?"

A cloud settled heavily upon Miss Norreys' brow.

"I shall never marry, Naya!" she declared. "Never speak to me again of marriage. I hate mankind I often think, at any rate, the man does not live whom I would marry."

"You wouldn't marry this Lord Chilton, then?"

"No. He is little more than a boy, Naya. He has recently come into his title and property through the death of his father. I saw much of him in London, and he made me his confidante. He loves some one else, Naya, some young girl in Yorkshire or London, and whom he has in some way lost. He has sought everywhere for her, but in vain. But even if he loved me, I should but smile at his folly, Naya. My heart is dead within me. I have lost all power of loving!"

Naya shook her head. She did not quite believe this statement, although she knew it to be made in sincerity. Miss Norreys was too warm-hearted and noble to live all her life alone, the woman thought, and she longed to see her mistress happily married. She knew how desolate was that life Miss Norreys now lived. She knew what nights of anguish Miss Norreys often now endured, and what a void reigned in her aching heart.

The mistress disrobed and went to bed. Naya shaded the light softly, and went out to her own chamber, which adjoined the bedroom. Gwen now occupied.

Miss Norreys tossed long upon her pillow, with that one thought and that one image possessing her mind—the thought and image of Lord Darkwood.

The next day Gwen was better, and was up and dressed, her box having been sent with that of the Lady Georgina. She wore her arm in a sling and did not venture to leave Miss Norreys' private apartments, perfect quiet and seclusion being deemed necessary for her. She lay all day on a couch, and Naya served her, and Miss Norreys read to her and petted her, and Gwen was strangely happy.

Her heart had gone forth to her beautiful hostess in an enthusiastic love, such as young girls often feel for others of their sex. Miss Norreys seemed to her the incarnation of beauty, goodness, and nobleness, and she bestowed upon her an enthusiastic worship such as she had never before felt for any one.

And Miss Norreys, touched by her admiration and adoration, felt for her a great yearning tenderness that was as new as strange.

"They are already as loving as two sisters," thought Naya, delightedly, loving her mistress too well to entertain a spark of jealousy. "Missy ought to keep this girl with her. She ought not to let her go back to Dunholm Castle. She might be Missy's companion, and be petted and loved to her heart's content. Missy wants a plaything like this girl."

Perhaps Miss Norreys thought so, too, for she devoted herself to Gwen upon this day; and the Lady Georgina, conceiving herself injured by these attentions to her companion, sulked and sat apart for hours, making herself decidedly disagreeable.

Lord Darkwood called upon this day also to inquire after Miss Myner. He saw Miss Norreys, had an interview with her, and went away, his infatuation deepened and strengthened into a great passion.

He had no suspicion that he had ever seen Miss Norreys before, but he was resolved to make her his wife.

This was already become the leading purpose of his life—his one ambition—his great and fixed determination.

She was rich, of excellent family, of wonderful beauty. She met in full all his requirements. She satisfied his reason and his heart. His will, which had swept an open path before him nearly always, was bent upon the accomplishment of his design.

And Miss Norreys read his purpose in his admiring glances, his softened tones, his very attitude.

After he had gone, she thought:

"He loves me! He intends to ask me to be his

wife. I have said that I should never marry, yet if he asks me to marry him, perhaps I may. And therein will lie my revenge! I almost think that I will marry him!"

She pondered the question often throughout that day and during the days that followed.

During that day, also, she wrote out the invitations she had designed, sending and despatched them to their several addresses.

Gwen's stay at Beechmont was prolonged for a week, it not being deemed advisable for her to return to Dunholm Castle sooner.

Her recovery under the care she received was rapid. The Lady Georgina was for the most part good-natured, and enjoyed her visit.

The friendship between Miss Norreys and Gwen deepened with every day and hour, but the former made no attempt to win the girl into her service as companion.

Lord Darkwood called at Beechmont every day. His devotion had become patent to the Beechmont household, to the Dunholm Castle retainers, and even to the Lady Georgina, who was quite unresigned to the idea of her father's second marriage.

The marquis desired the two girls to remain at Beechmont as long as possible, in order to afford excuse for his daily visits to Miss Norreys; but that lady graciously informed him that she expected visitors, and invited him to come often during their stay, saying that she should depend upon him to assist in their entertainment.

At the end of the week, Georgina and Gwen, now herself again, returned to Dunholm Castle. Before they quitted Beechmont, letters had been received from the persons invited, accepting Miss Norreys's invitation, and the guests were expected to arrive during the following week.

Gwen had heard that Lord Chilton would visit Beechmont, and her heart thrilled at the sound of that name. She believed Lord Chilton to be the father of her lover, Ronald Chilton, whom she demured false to her, and she longed to see him herself unknown.

"Ronald will not be here," she said to herself. "It is well. I could not bear to look upon his face again!"

And yet, Ronald, her lover, was the Lord Chilton who was to arrive at Beechmont!

Would they meet? If so, what would come of that meeting?

(To be continued.)

ONE YEAR'S PROBATION.

CHAPTER III.

The glimpse which she had had of what might come was too intolerable.

Well, a year is a long time. Those three hundred and sixty-five sunrises and sunsettings, those innumerable influences and impulses and their counter currents. And when the pulse is young and strong, and life is new,

"We live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breaths, in feelings, not in figures on a dial; We should count time by heart throbs."

All through the winter Laurence Wentworth's passion did not wane. It only changed in this particular—that at first he inclined to talk to his sister, of his experience, and by-and-bye he chose to be silent concerning it.

By-and-by he was convinced that the postponement of his and Deborah's marriage had been wise, and was not sure but a still longer engagement would prove desirable. He would have scorned the idea that he could change, but he was contented to let matters rest as they were. In short, when September came again, he was in just that mood of mind most open to a new impression, and when a feather's weight will turn the trembling scale.

Unawares his attention to Deborah had relaxed. His letters were shorter—as letters always are to those from whom we have been longest parted. He neglected the occasional gifts, because there was nothing to suggest what trifle Deborah might like just now. It never occurred to him that any offering could come to her from such a course.

The first day of September dawned and waned to a brilliant noon without his remembering that the month which ended his probation had begun.

In the suburban town where the Wentworths resided there was a county fair open that day, and Angie reminded him that he was one of its patrons and appointed judges. So in the course of the afternoon, with his dainty and delicate sister, he drove his well-appointed team about the grounds, and alighted at length to make the tour of Flora Hall.

All was as usual there—pumpkins, dahlias, tired women, crotched tiddies.

All of a sudden Laurence Wentworth stopped with a start, as if he had seen a ghost.

Stretched across the hall there hung a bedspread, "As much like a flock of wild geese as anything," Mrs. Prince had said those ninety-nine triangles looked when they were all pieced together.

Laurence stood still, staring at it.

"Horrible thing, isn't it?" said Angie. "Give one a nightmare to sleep under it."

Laurence passed on.

"I want to take you up into Hampshire for a few days, Angie. I wish you would be ready to start to-morrow noon."

"Why, where do you mean to take me, Laurie?"

"To see my future wife, dear. I expect to be married next month."

"No—not!"

"Yes."

"I thought you had given it all up, it is so long."

"Miss Jackson put me on a year's probation. I wanted to marry her just a year ago."

Miss Wentworth turned pale.

"She would not marry you, Laurence, when you wished?"

"No!"

Angie was slowly coiling her long hair. When she had done she said, rather breathlessly:

"I think she must be worth marrying."

"Is that bedspread done, Deborah?" inquired Deborah's lover, during one of the days of that happy visit.

"Yes; shall I show it to you?"

"No, dear. Never please."

"Why not?"

"Oh, Deborah, I saw one like it at a fair. And a girl had done it when they called 'love-cracked!' It stunned me some way. Tell me, darling, did you never doubt whether this probation would turn out for the best?"

"I knew which ever way it turned out would be for the best."

"Deborah, sometimes I think I do not half understand you yet!"

She smiled.

"Not if you think I should go mad for love, Laurence, and seek consolation in pleasing bed-spreads."

"But what have you been doing, all this long year?"

"She pointed, with a smile, to her book-shelves.

"Latin and geometry," said Laurence, in pretended dismay. His sister came up and passed her arm lightly about Deborah's round waist.

"I said before I saw you that the girl who would not take Laurence Wentworth for the asking was worth marrying, and I find I was right."

And Deborah brought out her bedspread.

"Just as I said," observed Mrs. Prince; "girls always have good luck when they take to patchwork. Maybe, now, we shouldn't have had the wedding if Deborah hadn't pieced a spread of wild geese."

W. H. P.

THE OLD MILL.

THERE was a little stream that ran through the forest, year after year, for I cannot tell how long, with nothing to do but bubble and gurgle, and splash and dash, and run along just as it had a mind to.

By-and-by a miller stopped it, and put it to work in his mill. Who can tell how many bushels of corn and sacks of wheat it ground to make bread for the families far and near? Sometimes it could hardly work fast enough; but it worked steadily, so steadily that wise men began to say—"Here is water enough to turn a cotton-mill, too."

The boys liked to go to the mill with their grists. It was fun to see the big water-wheel spin and dash round and round, and watch the corn drop into the hopper, and hear the clapper, clapper of the grinding, and see the meal pouring. Besides, the old miller was a favourite. He did not talk much, to be sure; he was a good listener, and always had the last word, if no other.

A new boy came one day with George Kent, when he brought his grist. They called him Jack. Jesse Stearns was sitting on a bag of meal, with a book in his hand. The schoolhouse was not far off, and the boys often visited the mill with their books as well as their bags.

"Studying, are ye?" cried Jack. "Well, I never liked schooling. My father wanted me to go to the academy. He wanted to make a scholar of me; but I had no notion of that, not I. I had rather go to sea."

"Water which runs at its own will

Is never known to turn a mill,"

said the old miller, who was busy tying up a bag of grists.

The boys looked round, but the word "sea" caught their attention.

"Then you have been to sea?" cried Abe Winslow, coming in from the door; "just when I wanted to go."

"Yes; I went to sea," said Jack, "but I got sick of it after two voyages, and so I quit."

"Water which runs at its own will

Is never known to turn a mill,"

said the old miller, from behind his hopper.

"The old fellow is forever telling about his mill," said George, in a laughing whisper.

"Well, Jack, what next?" asked Jesse.

"Then father put me into a machine shop; but they pretty soon found I was no mechanician. I did not like it, and so ran away."

"And turned up here to try your hand at farming," said Jesse. "You must stick to it, and work like a Trojan to have it turn to much account, father says."

"I do not know about that," said Jack.

"Water which runs at its own will

Is never known to turn a mill,"

said the old miller, who had kept his ears open. "Do you know what that means, youngsters?"

"Why, it means that water left to itself is not likely to grind corn or turn snindles," said Jesse.

"It means you must dam up your power to make it tell," said George.

"It means that to accomplish anything you must stop and work," said Winslow.

"To my mind, it means we must have a purpose and stick to it," said the old man.

Jack saw in a moment the old miller was hitting him, and pretty soon he backed off the premises. The rest of the boys went back to school, while he took his way up stream, where he sat down on a mossy bank. The water flowed smoothly here, but all the while it seemed to sing in his ear—

"Water which runs at its own will

Is never known to turn a mill."

THE LONDON READER.

THOSE persons having charge of families who do not see them supplied with THE LONDON READER weekly leave a very important duty unfinished. Such a medium of instruction has many advantages over books; first, because no books of equal capacity in quantity can be offered so cheaply; secondly, none are so interesting, because it consists of a variety measured out in the proportion quantities, as to time and quality. Being now every week, it invites to a habit of reading, and affords an easy and agreeable mode of acquiring knowledge, so essential to every one. It causes many hours to pass away pleasantly and profitably, which would otherwise have been spent in idleness and mischief. The first taste for reading that is elicited from children is manifested in the miscellaneous journal, in which they earliest learn to feel an interest, and to read with attention. Some writer has said he could at once decide whether a family were in the habit of reading a good journal or not, by a very few minutes' conversation upon general subjects with its younger members. There is a moral in all of this, that it is well to understand.

PAINT AND POWDER.

THERE was a time, not many years ago, when a woman of five-and-twenty can recollect it—when to meet in the street a person of our sex who was coated with artificial red and white, who had pencil-ed eyebrows, and underlined eyes, and was altogether like a wax doll in a Christmas show-window, was quite a shock to a modest lady. One looked away from her, and said nothing, and felt uncomfortable.

Today it is different. Old prejudices cling to some of us. But, after one has started, and uttered a secret "Good gracious!" on the arrival of some mysterious "work of art," with the odour of Laban's violet powder and somebody's cream of lilies hovering about it, one is introduced to it as Mrs. John Smith, and finds that it belongs to one's own pet charitable society, or one's own church—that it is thoroughly respectable, though it is enamelled.

In fact, "ladies" do "paint" now a days, though only, if they are very, very foolish. To my mind they often make themselves hideous. But as that is

a matter of opinion, let it pass. One thing, however, is certain—for the illusion of the present, people who colour themselves, however artfully, give much they might actually possess in the future. Powder, red or white, will ruin the firmest skin and dot the face with great pores; and the dryness that it induces is the most favourable thing for wrinkles one can think of.

The time will come when the "woman" who has ever powdered much, can do no longer; for, once skin that has grown too rough, powder shows too plainly; at last must be forsaken, and cast aside no longer comfortable to behold.

Whoever has painted for a year or so must paint for ever, or be hideous. Firm skins, clear eyes, pleasant, wholesome faces are when possessed by middle-aged women where healthy and have used soap and water as cosmetics; but never, I believe, by those who have dragged their skins, and hidden them with powders and washes from the light of day.

It is better, surely, to be unrespectable and comely object. All one's life then to be soft and white and pretty for five years—always supposing this object is attained—and after that to wear a yellow mask that is absolutely repulsive. In a word, whether it is done in society or not, the loss of any good looks she may possess is only a question of time, after a woman once begins to paint.

However, preach as we may, the pretty boxes and puffs and bottles stand in the windows; and pretty lies about the harmlessness of their contents are printed beneath pictures of angelic beings in the act of applying them. You may have a marble nose and gilt hair for awhile, if you like, and afterward a real nose and no hair at all, and repentance.

M. K. D.

THE SPOILED CHILD.

CHAPTER I.

"As I have often said to you, Mary, she is my namesake, and I am willing to do all in my power to advance her interests, and to relieve you of the care of her, but I cannot have my plan interfered with. She is decidedly the beauty of your family. The other girls look like their father. But Lizzie is not only more than passably handsome; she has, moreover, a great deal of natural style about her—a thing which is more attractive. She attracted much attention when she was with me, four years ago, although she was nothing but a school-girl. She has matured rapidly and finely, and I predict a brilliant career and an advantageous settlement for her, if you will make her over to me, unconditionally, for the next six, or perhaps eight months."

So spoke the ambitious Mrs. Mockridge, the wife of a wealthy city merchant, to her country sister, Mrs. Garland. For the first time in ten years, the former had wandered quite out of her orbit, to visit her nearest living relative, and cool, worldly woman though she was, her affections, as well as her pride, were tried by the sight of the care-worn face of the faithful mother who had to rear and clothe eight children, with but little real assistance from her husband.

Matthew Garland had been a spruce young clergyman when he married Mary Knight. In the ownership of his late conferred title of "Reverend" his blooming bride and accepted "call" to an eligible country parish, he looked like a brave and happy man and felt like a distinguished one.

But the clerical suit grew rusty space, the now honour became an old story—and being thoroughly used to one's honour is the next worst thing to having no honour at all—while the wife's roses paled fast under the onerous duties and trials of that most depressing of all lives, the lot of a poor clergyman's spouse, when the adjective of poverty applies with like correctness to paucity of original talent and alacrity of means.

They had three children when the congregation to which he broke and distributed what they proclaimed—in their chagrin over the lamentable mistake they had committed in electing the Rev. Matthew to be a heavy and stale substitute for the bread of life—compelled him to quit the "eligible" field for another which was confessedly ineligible. But what could he do? "Beggars may not be choosers," saitily with the adage, and the Rev. Matthew, with his, was in imminent danger of beggary if he stayed to quarrel because his bread was not buttered on both sides.

There were many times, during the period of his second pastorate, when, as poor Mrs. Garland could have certified, it was very hard work to procure bread upon which to spread butter, if the latter

luxury had been forthcoming. Yet they struggled on for ten years against penury and discouragement, and oftentimes bodily ailments on the part of both husband and wife; for a grinding, wearing existence like this was as strange and terrible to them in experience as it had been unlooked for in their visions of their rosy future, as pictured by the enamoured divinity student and his fiancee in the dear old days.

Both had been reared in comfort that was affluence in comparison with their present surroundings, and both felt the reverse keenly—the wife mournfully and unashamedly, deplored the privations of those she loved best—the husband, with a sort of sullen resentment against the world that had failed to award him the reward of appreciation which he firmly believed his merits deserved.

The parson over whom he presided was composed of plain-country-folk, who did not demand the daintiness of intellectual food, and he came to them, crushed by a sense of defeat and disgrace.

Just after the advent of the seventh child, a committee of his congregation waited upon him, and informed him, in effect, that, in their estimation, "the day of usefulness amongst them had come to a close," assured him that he would "carry with him into whatever new field of labour he should be led by Divine Providence to select, those prayers and good wishes for his success and happiness."

At this, the darkest hour of his never brilliant career, a ray of light shone through the encompassing clouds. His wife's uncle, a rich landowner, dying, bequeathed to his favourite niece—a small farm—the household of the Knight family—privately settling it upon herself and her children. Then Mr. Garland discovered that he had been for a long time afflicted with chronic bronchitis.

So, throwing up the ministry that had been his birthright, he took the payment of a good widow's allowance, and a liberal sum of medical expenses, the largest legacy of which was to be accepted.

"A man could never choose who has a bit of ground on which to plant worm and generation," he remarked, thankfully, to his wife, when the terms of the bequest reached them.

His children had thenceforward an abundant supply of those homely but indispensable articles of home consumption, and thrived as well, perhaps better than if they had been nourished upon richer fare.

Of the eight, but three were boys—a circumstance which was deeply regretted by the father as he bowed his fast-whitening head above the plow and thought how much more in consonance with his tastes and better suited to his declining age and strength would be the position of superintendent and director of a band of stalwart young workmen—over which the mother sighed secretly in the anticipation of the hard lot apportioned to her daughters by the accident of their sex.

They must work for a living or be dependent upon their brothers, and, among the few avenues of independent labour open to women, they had no choice but to take the humbler and more arduous means of gaining a livelihood.

Their parents were gentlefolk, and the girls were too well-educated to think of stooping to menial situations.

Mrs. Garland had, among her other occupations, assumed the duty of instructing them, assisted in certain branches by her husband, but neither could teach modern accomplishments.

In various kinds of house work; in cooking, and even the lighter tasks of gardening, to wit: planting and weeding, three of them were proficient, and rendered essential service to the household.

Lizzie, the eldest child, had, at the date of our story, counted twenty-five winters, during fifteen of which she had not walked as many steps.

A hopeless cripple from her tenth year, borne from room to room by her father and brothers, or wheeled in her easy chair, she yet performed her part, and that no mean one, in the routine of severe, constant labour that pressed upon the family.

She sewed and knitted, and taught the younger children work and lessons from the few books she had herself when a child; was confined in and consulted by all, and out of the abundance of her own affliction, drew treasures of comfort and cheer for others.

Lizzie was the beloved "innermost" of the Garland home—her chamber of languishing, the temple to which every one could freely resort.

Next her came Henry, a stout young farmer, now in his twenty-fourth year, he having followed hard upon his sister's heels.

His mother had sat upon her knees, beside his cradle, dedicated this, her first-born son, to the ministry.

She thought of the solemn act of consecration at times now, when she beheld him engaged in occupations she had been accustomed, in her girlhood.

When he donned his coarse clothes to do the night's milking; to litter down the cattle and chop wood, this brave woman heaved an inward sigh at the contrast between his attire and business and the ecclesiastical broadcloth and honourable toil of the student of sacred lore.

Fortunately the youth inherited his father's mind, without his unwarrantable aspirations after social and public eminence. He looked the unimaginative yeoman, and he cared to be nothing higher.

A physiognomist, scanning his good-natured, ruddy face, the tall blue eye that had the patient stare of those of foxes, his loose lips and slightly receding chin, would have felt grateful to the combination of circumstances that had frustrated the maternal designs in his behalf, and consigned him to his legitimate vocation—that of a tiller of the earth.

James, the second son, was more lively in mind and gentle in manner. Whether brother should have been the professional man, it was he, and he had moments of yearning for a different sphere of labour, which would have lengthened into hours of discontented brooding, but for Uncle Henry's advice, and the necessity of continual activity in other pursuits. Neither he nor Henry could be spared from the farm-work, at any rate not until Henry should be strong enough to manage plough and spade, and then he (James) would inherit his father's new life.

In these disquieted moments he had one sympathizing confidante—Lizzie, another link to him self in ways, and most like him in appearance. She resembled Henry about as much as was of Dresden when she was a pipkin of red clay; chose amid the dimmest appointments of her home, as among plainest blossoms, blossoms that exude the balsam of hollyhocks.

Matthew pretty in feature, she united to this advantage the rarer charms of an elegant carriage and natural refinement of speech and behaviour, such as is generally supposed to be the result of diligent schooling in the ranks of cultivated society.

Viewed from a worldly standpoint, her second best advantage—putting her beauty first—was the fact that she was the namesake of her wealthy aunt, Mrs. Garland's only surviving sister. This had won for the child occasional tokens of remembrance from her lofty relative—once in the shape of an invitation to spend three months with her in her city home, and, semi-annually, in the form of cast-off dresses from Mrs. Mockridge's nursery or wardrobe, which, passing through Lizzie's skillful fingers, became, in the wonderful eyes of the rustic damsels, fairy-like robes for the use of their beautiful and petted sister.

It was pleasant, and yet there was a pathos in it—the unanimity with which the various members of the family concurred in admiring and spoiling her to whom Nature had already been so bonny. The smallest or the number, chubby little Molly, would check her play to run on an errand, or perform some trifling service for Lizzie, with the same unquestioning alacrity, the same cheerfulness of self-denial that characterised the mother's tacit assumption of the heavier and homlier details of house and kitchen-work that would otherwise have fallen upon her darling's graceful shoulders.

Her own hands were worn almost fleshless by years of drudgery, and it mattered little that scrubbing and cooking had hardened and tanned those of Susan and Hannah, as long as Lizzie's taper fingers were smooth and white.

Happily for the girl, and those who associated with her, Lizzie's influence here too was strong, yet so sweetly exerted, that the subject of it obeyed her instructions from pure love for her guide.

But for this restraint the idol of the household would have grown up to be a disagreeable compound of discontent and vanity, selfishness and affectation, a curse to herself and all about her.

What she really was we will leave our story to show.

The affection between the two sisters was singularly ardent and pure, and it was to the room of the "innermost" that the excited child flew upon the first evening of Aunt Mockridge's visit to announce the joyful intelligence that she was to pass the whole of the ensuing winter in that paradise of her desires—the city.

"And it will be a different visit from that which I paid before!" she said, triumphantly. "You remember Uncle Mockridge was very sick all the time I was there, and I had masters in dancing and all manner of studies. Besides, Aunt said I was entirely too young to 'come out.' Now she wishes me to make a formal debut, under her shapenage, and she thinks that my season will be a grand success. I heard her tell mamma so."

"Four French words in one sentence!" smiled Lizzie. "You begin to catch the fashionable dialect already!"

"I can't help it when Aunt's conversation with us is so plentifully seasoned with la belle langue,"



[AUNT AND NIECE.]

laughed Lottie, mischievously copying her aunt's drawl.

"My love," expostulated Lizzie, yet unable to look grave, "Is that quite respectful?"

Lottie checked herself in her waltz around the room.

I know that you think me brainless and heartless, Lizzie! You needn't deny it, for I am half the time of the same opinion myself, and the other half in mourning for my sins in this regard; but I cannot help being delighted just now. The truth is, I do not like to be poor! I do not fancy made over dresses and re-trimmed bonnets that are always behind the mode and make one look like a scarecrow, after we have expended all our forlorn efforts to modernize them. I detest, with all the strength of heart, soul and mind, rag carpets and paper window shades and earthenware dinner sets and painted pine tables. Don't begrudge the poor butterfly a flight once in a great while into the sunshine that looks so alluring, and a sip of different food. A life of luxurious leisure seems so delightfully natural to me, that I really persuade myself, while enjoying it, that I am to "the manor born;" that this slavish existence is but an odious dream. Lizzie! I cannot describe to you the sickness of heart that overwhelms me each morning, as I open my eyes upon the cracked whitewashed wall of my room, with its scant and battered furniture! Don't hate me, dear; for, indeed, I cannot help it!"

"Poor child! poor tender birdling!" murmured the sister, stroking the bright head that had dropped upon her knee. "It is a hard lot for one so young and beautiful—one who loves the sunny side of life—but, darling! there are fates which, while they may seem more enviable to the lookers-on, are yet far more bitter to endure."

"I would like to make the trial, at all events!" cried Lottie, pitiably, brushing away the tears, ashamed of her weakness, yet eager to controvert her sister's position. "I wish you had left out that last sentence. It is a trite, silly phrase, used, nine times out of ten, to hide the secret envy of the speaker at the spectacle of his neighbour's prosperity. Rich people are not so fond of quoting the adage, and they are the best judges of the power of money to buy enjoyment."

"I have heard it, many times, from the mouths of the rich and great," said Lizzie, softly.

"But how did they say it—and why? In a gallantly patronizing way to reconcile you to your condition? As Aunt Mockridge praised your geraniums to-day, just as if she meant, 'Pretty well—considering!' Look at her with her diamonds and silks;

her fair, smooth face and white fingers loaded with rings—and then at poor, dear mamma—even in her best dress, worn this evening in honour of her rich sister's visit—a delaine, and her clean but awfully dowdyish cap; her sallow skin and freckled, bony hands! What has kept the one young and strong, comfortable in mind and body, while the want of it has enfeebled the constitution, destroyed the good looks and worn down the spirits of the other? Ah, Liz! it is easy to abuse money, but a difficult matter to find anything that will supply the place thereof. It is the philosopher's stone of this age, you may depend upon it!"

"Still"—Lizzie's tone was softer still and her eyes dreamingly tender—"is it not true that our eyes rest more lovingly upon the wrinkles in forehead and cheek and the gray hairs that witness to dear mamma's years of care and devotion, her self-denial and toil in our behalf, than upon Aunt Mockridge's better-preserved features? Are not love and truth and gratitude jewels worth striving for? The wise parent who has given these to our blessed mother with the spared lives of her children, years ago, robbed her sister of her last daughter; decreed her a lonely, childless old age."

Lottie was thoughtful for few moments—but not, as her words presently showed, engaged in pondering her sister's latest remark.

"Do you know, Lizzie, I think it strange she never adopted me? How I wish she would!"

Lizzie did not answer, save by a large tear that slowly welled up in her patient eyes and found its way down her cheek.

The spoiled child started as it fell upon her hand.

"I am not a monster of selfishness, dear sister! I was just thinking, at that instant, how much of comfort and luxury I could bestow upon you, if I were rich. Fancy yourself sleeping upon an elastic mattress by night, instead of the husk bed that makes your poor joints ache and bruises your tender flesh; imagine this clumsy lounge exchanged for the softest and easiest of arm-chairs, and in place of the basket of coarse stockings upon your stand and the few old volumes that mount guard beside it, all the latest patterns of crocheted and netting, with worsteds and floss to match, and when you did not feel like sewing, dozens of new books! Think how game and jellies and choice fruit would tempt your appetite upon your confessedly sick days, and good wine to bring back the lost strength. Above all, imagine to yourself the luxury of perfect repose, when your head is all awhirl with pain, and every nerve in your body thrilling in sympathy! All this you should

have and much more were I Aunt Mockridge's adopted daughter."

"I am content!" Lizzie tried to say it with a smile, but Lottie detected the troubled look in her eyes, the tremor in her tone, and felt that her fancy sketch had aroused longings in her auditor's mind that were not to be laid to rest by a single effort. Books and rest, how much of earthly delight these represented to Lizzie's imagination, she could never tell. She never would try to do it, lest the impracticable dream should distress those she loved.

Lottie rattled on.

"And dear mamma should have two silk dresses—a dove-colour and a black and real lace caps and servants to do her bidding, while she should sit in lady-like state and take her ease."

"There, dear!" Lizzie's uplifted hand arrested the girlish prattle. "This picture is a stronger temptation to discontent with Heaven's dealings than your kind wishes in my behalf. Dear mamma! noble, gentle martyr! what sad thoughts I have, sitting here alone and thinking of her changeful life, her blighted hopes, her labours and her sorrows. For I, only of you all, can remember her at her best before her pretty wedding-clothes wore out, and her beauty deserted her gentle face. These air castles are a dangerous indulgence; they unfit one for battling with real troubles—for submitting to unavoidable privations. We must remember, moreover," she added, more lightly, "that Aunt Mockridge's adopted daughter would need to have a fortune in her own right in order to carry out all her benevolent schemes in behalf of her poor relatives."

Lottie had another and a longer thinking spell, tossing over the contents of Lizzie's work basket while she ruminated.

"Lizzie," she said at last, "a woman ought not to marry a poor man."

"That is a sweeping assertion." Lizzie's gentle voice could scarcely be said to convey a rebuke, but there was a shade of warning in it.

"I mean it," affirmed Lottie, stoutly. "My husband may be good and gifted and handsome. I should like, of course, if I might dictate to Destiny, that he should be all the *rest* of these—it would be so much pleasanter. As far, Sparrowgrass would say, he would be a nicer thing to have in the family. But, young or old, intelligent or illiterate, goodly or mean or ugly as Pluto, he must, shall and will be rich! He must promise me, 'Ye shall walk in silk attire,' and must be able as well as willing to keep his word."

(To be continued.)



"IN DURANCE VILE."

R E U B E N ;

W I X M O N T A G O

O N L Y A G I P S Y .

CHAPTER XIII.

DINGLEY jail, as the little lock-up was called, was not at the best of times a cheerful place.

It stood neither in nor out of Dingley village, at the corner of the high road to Deane, and could be seen by few of the passers-by unless they stepped out of their way to dodge the great elms which sheltered while it hid it.

It was an old building, very strong still, though its solid masonry looked crumbled on the outside and its thick oaken door was worm-eaten and scarred by time and the whimsical hands of many generations of Dingley youths.

The jail contained two cells, each of which was lighted by a small, heavily-barred window set too high in the wall to allow of the prisoner getting more than a very distant view of the scenery.

That distant view the unfortunate incarcerated could well have done without, for it comprised a long, bleak moor, on which a gibbet still reared its ghastly head.

Whether the gibbet had been erected on the spot to form a pleasing object likely to have a beneficial effect upon all prisoners in Dingley jail no historian has recorded, but the fact remained that the occupant of either cell could not look out of his dismal window without seeing the weird warning, upon which, when the wind was in a right direction, he could hear the rattle of chains which had supported many a dreadful burden.

To Dingley jail Reuben's captors triumphantly conducted him, their triumph rather damped and their spirits heightened by the utter indifference and composure with which the prisoner seemed to regard his situation.

Indeed, by his gait and bearing, one would have thought that he had arrested Jobson, the constable, rather than vice versa, and Jobson was not a little nettled by the coolness of his prisoner.

With a crowd of keepers and loafers at his heels he marched along, his hand upon Reuben's arm and his constable's staff grasped firmly, as if he were quite ready to knock the former down on the slightest appearance of an attempt at escape.

The jail was soon reached, and Jobson pompously unlocked the heavy iron-sheathed door and motioned to Reuben to enter.

With an inclination of the head Reuben was about to obey when he stopped suddenly and said:

"By whose authority am I arrested?"

Jobson stared for a moment and looked round at the crowd, which instantly dropped into silence and drew closer.

"By whose authority?" repeated the constable. "By the magistrate's, of course, and—get in!"

"I will see the warrant, if you please," said Reuben.

Jobson hesitated and looked at him contemptuously.

"Oh, you'll see the warrant, will you, my fine fellow? and what's the use of your seeing the warrant? You can't read it."

"That depends upon the writing," said Reuben, quickly, and the coolness of the answer did not increase the constable's animosity.

"And suppose I don't choose to show it you?"

"Then I refuse to consider myself a prisoner," said Reuben, with great decision.

There was a murmur in the crowd, and Jobson seemed for the moment staggered.

"That is law, if I know anything of it," said Reuben.

"Ah, you'll know enough presently," snarled the constable. "More than you'll like, I'm thinking. I'll show you the warrant fast enough, and much good may the sight of it do you. Now then."

And beckoning to the crowd to draw nearer and keep a sharp look-out, as if Reuben would suddenly take unto himself wings and fly away, he took the warrant from his pocket and held it out.

Reuben took a lantern from a boy's hand and held it near the document.

"Hold it up," said he.

Jobson reddened with indignation at the tone of command. He nevertheless held the document so that Reuben could read its purport.

"On a charge of poaching and violent assault, young man," said Jobson. "And if that don't mean six months at the treadmill I don't know nothing."

"Who signed this warrant?" asked Reuben, quietly.

"Who signed it?" snarled Jobson. "Squire Verner, Mr. Impudence. And he'll sign something else for you, I don't doubt."

"John Verner," muttered Reuben, turning away and stepping into the cell. "Always that name! Is it Fate?"

With a silent, malicious grin, the constable clang'd the door to, and the prisoner was left alone.

"Always that name!" he muttered. "It is one

of ill omens for me."

And with a smile that was almost a sigh he sank down upon the straw pallet and looked round the narrow cell.

Outside the crowd still hung about, talking and laughing, and their voices came through the grated window to him in a confused medley, boding disgrace, shame, imprisonment.

He sighed for a moment, then rose and fell to pacing the stone floor.

Think he could not while the hum and buzz remained, but presently the crowd dropped away one by one, and then fell a silence deep as the grave.

The moon rose and shot a beam into the farthest corner of the cell, and then Reuben could think after all. This, then, was the end!

"Well," he mused, "what is to be is to be; at least I have conquered. She wore my ribbon to night—she wore my ribbon, and she will never know that!"

He stopped, and a sudden fear shot across him.

Would Topsy be faithful to her promise? Would she keep his secret? What if she told? Then the name which to him was the most sacred in the world could hold would be buzzed about by every alehouse gossip, and all the county would be talking and jesting of the young lady who suffered a gipsey to ride through a summer's day for a piece of ribbon?

Would she, could she ever forgive him if the truth were known? She so sensitive, as he knew so great a nature must be, of her dignity and her name! No! Whatever happened the truth must not prevail.

He would plead guilty to the poaching, to the assault, and take his punishment like a man—for her sake!

For her sake!

The words brought a sweetness to him which the fairest music that ever left musician's hand could not equal.

For her sake!

He glanced through the window and smiled at the gibbet.

Yes, even that death, shameful and abhorred, for her sweet sake!

But Topsy! Could she be trusted? Oh, if he could but see her, could beg her with all the eloquence he was capable of to keep her lips closed!

If he could but send her a slip of paper with a few impressive words upon it!

He had read of women—women of low degree too—who had died rather than break their word given in solemn faith. If he could see her, the girl Topsy might be as faithful, and all would be well.

What could he do?—perhaps some one of the

crowd still lingered and would, either for reward or charity, take a message for him.

He felt in his pockets and drew out all the money he possessed, only a few silver coins at most, and then, with a dawn of hope in his heart, knocked at the door.

No answer came, and, with a sinking of the heart, he knew that he was alone.

He grew excited at the dread that the truth would be known, grew upon him, and from that moment of indifference which had so longed the miserable he fell into an irritable, anxious fever which would have gladdened Jobson's heart.

Hour after hour passed, the moon rose in all her glory and flooded the cell.

His restless mood could not last in that endless flood of beautiful light, and the antelope-like gallop and gave himself up to thoughts of the living who had suddenly filled his heart with an image which would have gladdened Jobson's heart.

Dancing, perhaps, her beauty wondrous charming by rich lights and surroundings. Dancing with his ribbon upon her bosom!

He smiled and followed his amazings in his heart. That thought brought him peace and a quiet delight.

For that night at least he had solved his, let come what would.

Worn in this reverie he fell asleep gently and snored as a child, and, for a time, his dreams were of her, the goddess who abode him, but to whom he could never reach and communed.

He thought also was standing in the moonlight looking down upon him, and that as he moved to throw himself further back she raised her hand to his bosom and touched the ribbon with a smile which said:

"I wear it for you."

Then the dream vanished, and in its place cameless horror.

Where she stood he saw the gibbet, and its chains were not empty, for they bore a curse, hideous and appalling, whose eyes glared down upon him with an expression in them which he seemed to know and recognize in a misty way as of something known to him when he was a child.

The curse swung to and fro, nearer and nearer, till it seemed to touch him; suddenly the face shone out a little, livid and threatening, and it was the face of Morgan Verne!

With a hoarse cry Reuben awoke and sprang to his feet.

His face was wet with the cold dew of fear and dread.

His limbs shook—and all for a dream!

As he tried to smile and shake the feeling off there came upon his ears, rendered acute by the nightmare, a cracking, rasping sound.

He looked round and through the window.

The gibbet was there, black and awful against the sky.

But the cracking chains—where were they?

Not on the gibbet, or he could have heard them.

Not there, but—oh, Heaven! under his window!

Was it fancy or did he hear the crack of the rusty iron outside the wall?

It was no fancy! They were there!

If so how came they there?—who carried them?

He thought of the phantom of his dream and shuddered.

The superstitions of his childhood—superstitions set strongly in gipsy nature—thronged upon him, and as the awful cracking gradually increased he fancied that the ghost of some hanged felon had risen and was calling outside for the door of the cell.

He tried to cry aloud, but his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth.

He could not move; his eyes were riveted with distended horror upon the grating.

Suddenly something struck the bars!

A shudder ran through him as he saw the somethings was a chain—a rusty chain, and that it clung to the bars upon which some ghostly hand had flung it.

Then as madness seemed to grasp his soul with icy hand, Reuben, with mighty effort, cast off the dread horror which made him nervous, and snatching up the iron jug which stood by his pallet, he stood prepared to meet the awful visitor.

The chain tightened—someone—something was pulling at it from below.

A rasping noise, muffled in a ghostly way, followed; then something dark, like a head, appeared above the ledge and then—a human face.

With a bound Reuben threw his frozen body against the wall and raised the pitcher to hurl it against the nameless, horrible spectre, but before it

could leave his hand the lips opened and a voice said:

"Reuben! Reuben!"

With a cry of anguished relief he let the pitcher drop and staggered against the wall.

"Weita!"

"Ay, lad—Heaven's mercy! I've killed him! Oh, idiot, dotard, that I be! I forgot the fright."

And the dwarf, clinging like a spider, huddled up against the window, moaned and trembled.

"No—not!" gasped Reuben, drawing nearer and thrusting up towards the bars his hand, which Weita seized and pressed, shivering at its icy coldness. "No—no—I'm a wretched, Weita—but the chains—the chains—and—ladd! It was but a dream!"

Weita dropped the chains with a cry of self-reproach.

"Forgive me, lad!" he cried, in this same imploring voice. "I forgot—I didn't think—but how could I get to know 'em out?"

"Then?—then they were the gibbets?" asked Reuben, with a shudder.

"Ay," replied Weita, in a low voice. "But forgot them, lad, forgot them, dear lad! Remember your poor old Weita, trying to see them and say a word of comfort—why, lad, I'd rob the dead of their shroud to make a rope to break thee if thou wert in the bottomless pit! What can terrify me when it stands 'twixt thou and me? My poor lad—my brave lad!"

"Howard, walter, Weita!" laughed Reuben, squeezing the long, claw-like hand. "But no more, lad, I'll forget again in my joy at seeing you! How do you stop there—that's not space to hold more than a hawk?"

"And that is what I am—more than man!" said Weita, with a croak. "I wouldn't change these mouldering bones to-night for the fairest hand that over a woman's bough—and we know who wears the fairest, eh, lad?"

"Buck!" said Reuben, as if the walls had ears. "You know—your heart?"

"All, lad," said Weita, relaxing into his shroud, human humour. "I'll never live space, and I knew they'd snared thee, lad, as sure as your feet had touched the net. But tell me the truth, Re, dear—tell me the truth—didst thou snare the hare?"

"No," responded Reuben, and his face darkened "No bird or beast of theirs should pass my lips if I were starving!"

"Well said!" croaked Weita, eagerly. "Hate 'em, lad, like poison, for they're death to thee and thine!"

"To me and mine!" repeated Reuben, looking up with astonishment and troubled eagerness. "Why do you say so, Weita?"

"Did I say so?" said the old man, peering curiously round him. "Words only, Re; are not all the rib and the mighty against the gipsy! But tell me what led to the blow, and how bad is it? Have they got thee, lad? No, no! not that!"

"I'm afraid they have," said Reuben, with a grave smile. "My blood was up, Weita, and the blows fell anywhere and hard as I knew how to put them. Blood was shed, and man must pay for that, you know!"

"Ay, ay!" said Weita; "then let it go on trust, lad. 'Hah! dash! Who clips gipsy's wings need fear no crow! We'll show them an empty cage to-morrow, lad! What! make a jail bird of Weita's boy—his pride! Not while the bat has claws to pick the stones apart! Listen; here take these and try the lock—take hold—quick! there's no time to lose. What?" for Reuben had kept fast hold of the one monkey-like hand, and had shaken his head with a smile of refusal, which, though grateful, was firm and decided.

"What?" exclaimed Weita, hoarsely, as his little eyes glanced down upon the pale, handsome face with intense surprise.

"No, no, that can't be, Weita; don't ask me why, or wherefore, but I must go through with this to the bitter end and keep my mouth closed!"

"Reu—Reu—don't break my heart—old Weita, it is that asks you—"

"And it is Reu—your Reu—that says it must not be. Weita, you know I love you, and that I'll go to the churchyard for you, but this I can't do even for you!"

"Why, why?" asked the dwarf, in a tone of miserable impotence, for he knew by the ring in Reuben's voice that he could not move him.

"That I can't, I must not say! Weita, the sasrat is a poor, miserable one, but it concerns another, and I'd rather take the word these tyrants could do than move an inch towards breaking faith. Don't ask me, old friend—more than friend!—let it go! If that door were opened I would not walk out free, for I should barter honour for liberty, and that's a bad bargain. Ah, Weita, don't you see how it hurts me

to say it, when I think of all you've done for me, all we are to each other? don't press me, Weita, don't!"

For a minute there was a dead silence, the hideous face working with a storm of emotions, then with a groan which seemed wrung from the true, brave heart of the small dwarf Weita said:

"Lad, I can't say no to thee—I can't press thee—I'm like clasping your hands, and—said... But to make me a jail-bird?" and the claw-like hand was dashed against the iron bar.

"Don't do that!" pleaded Reuben. "For my sake remember that, Weita! Threaten me! I know what's best—and you, remember, though I'd give ten years of myself to keep you safe!"

"Oh!" said Weita hoarsely, "gods! when I've floated over the thought that would be by my side for all time to come! Oh, lad! if you wouldn't break away! All of us will do something—send me something!"

"Weita!—will Weita?" "Weita, you shall do more than pick this shabby Jack Tar coat, for that would never be little; this I ask you to do will make me free in heart and mind, and that is the best sort of liberty a man can have. See here, Weita—will you take messenger for me?"

"To the Devil himself! Hell!" said the dwarf, fiercely.

"To Little Tapey at the hall, Weita—and these words: 'Remember your promise and on the honour of a woman keep silence!'" interrupted Reuben, eagerly.

"Remember your promise and on the honour of a woman keep silence!" repeated Weita, hoarsely. "Thereabout, she will know who will be true!"

With a long, low, suppressed sigh, Weita crossed the room with the head held high through the strange interview.

"It is no use, lad, speak you?"

"Not another word more, dear Weita, if you love me—take my message and my heart with you! Don't fear for me, I'm safe enough and happy!"

One more pressure and the bat-like figure had disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

They had broken up and Lord Craven sat in his easy-chair in the smoking-room; but not alone, for opposite him, on a lounge which had been planned by a genius who understood the human form divine, lay his friend Normanby.

"Well," said Normanby, breaking a silence which had lasted for some time, "have you given up the bad habit of slumbering, Craven, or is this the first attempt at perpetual wakefulness. In plain English, do you mean to go to bed?"

" Eh," said Lord Craven, starting, "I beg your pardon, my dear fellow, I was thinking."

"Never do that," retorted Normanby, languidly, "it brings wrinkles and injures one's digestion."

Lord Craven laughed.

"Pray what have you been doing all this time?"

"Nothing," said Normanby.

"And you have done it well, very well."

"I am glad of that," said Normanby. "I believe I can do it well, too, it comes natural, but may I enquire the subject which exercises you in such an unusual manner?"

Lord Craven laughed again and looked at his friend through a haze of smoke.

"I've been thinking, Normanby, that—I say, how did you think the drum went off?"

"That's a nice way to answer a question! Why capitally, you scores success again as usual. Lucky man, for whom the word failure has no meaning!"

"Don't say that," said Lord Craven, and a shade came over his fine face. "I feel at this moment how that my life has been one whole failure."

"Hum!" drawled Normanby, looking up at the ceiling. "Here is a man who has tried everything and done everything telling another who has done nothing that he has failed! You have wealth, health, rank, fame; your name is known wherever art holds her head: you have the finest yacht, the sweetest horse, the grandest house, and I believe you grow the largest turpentine in England, and yet—

"I am dissatisfied, and I am a failure."

"The supper, which was excellent, has disagreed with you, my friend," said Normanby, lighting a fresh cigar with a serene air of assurance.

"No," said Lord Craven, "I have not got dyspepsia, Nor."

"Then—but I hesitate to name the fearful disease which comes next in my thoughts," said Normanby.

"Don't hesitate," laughed Lord Craven, "but out with it. What is the matter with me?"

"As a man who has studied his fellow-man, I should hazard the opinion that you are—pray pardon me—in love!"

Lord Craven flushed for a moment, and shifted his attitude to one which removed his face from his friend's direct line of sight.

"You are a strange fellow. Nor, I never can make you out."

"You are not alone in that line, my friend," interrupted Normanby, "but proceed."

"You are a keen observer of men's manners and men's minds?"

"Thank you. Shall I pass the claret? That compliment deserves something," broke in Normanby softly.

"And I feel as a poor wretch of a patient does when the doctor takes his hand and feels his pulse. You think I am in love?"

Normanby nodded.

"What can I think? You have left the claret untouched for an hour. That elegant reminder of the fleeting hours on the chimney-piece has just recorded the hour of five, and you do not hint at bed. Love is the only disease which could excuse such singular conduct, and so I hazard the conjecture."

Lord Craven laughed.

"What is love?" he asked.

"I'm bad at conundrums," retorted Normanby, "ask somebody else."

"Well, what do you think of Olive Seymour?"

"Thanks, my friend, for your candour. So it is that beauty with many a man has been lured on to destruction or won to happiness—whichever way you like to put it—by less beauty and with meaner excuse. What do I think of her? I never think on any subject I cannot understand. Women, my dear Craven, are mysteries, and I leave them at that, perfectly satisfied to wonder, admire, and smile at a distance. Poor Craven!"

"Why do you say that?" asked Lord Craven. "Do I deserve your sympathy?"

"You get it all, the same. Olive Seymour is not for you, my dear lord."

Lord Craven shifted his seat again, and eyed his phlegmatic friend in silence.

"What do you mean, my dear fellow? Putting aside the directness of the insinuation, why is Olive Seymour beyond my reach?"

"Because she's already sold and should be dictated."

"You talk as if women were chrysalises."

"So they are, and as beautiful as fragile. We admire them one moment as they stand upon the pedestal, we grieve the next, as they fall and are shattered. Put not your trust in china vases."

Lord Craven rose with a half-troubled, half-amused restlessness.

"Normanby," he said suddenly, "can you be serious?"

"As a judge who listens to the poor wretches pleading for the life which he does not mean to give him. Go on."

"Listen to me for a few minutes, and then you may go to bed. You are right—you who always are, when you say I am not myself to-night. I can't tell what all me, and I don't think you can. I feel distressed, restless, watchful for something, I know not what. Normanby, I have most of the things which most men want; I have all, and have done all you credited me with, but to-night I feel that my life has been a huge mistake, and that as I stand here, I am in my solitary, aimless existence, fair game for you and all the rest of the world to laugh at. Now, doctor, that's my case, proceed."

There was a serious gravity running through the seemingly careless words, which told how deeply the speaker felt them.

Neither the tone nor the expression of the speaker's face was lost upon his companion, who, as he sat there listening, weighed both with the scumens of a judge and the face of a statue.

If women were a mystery, so also was Julius Normanby, the friend and confidant of so many, the known of none.

As he lay there, his friend looking down upon him, saw a handsome face from which all other expression save that of serene impassiveness had been carefully banished since the day on which he had first learnt that the human countenance could be used to mask the mind and the motive.

Wherever he went this man, Normanby, was made welcome, whether the host was prince or peasant, and yet no man could say whence he originally sprang, and to what bournes in life his days were pointed.

Money he had, friends he had, history he had none.

And this was the man to whom Lord Craven applied for advice and counsel.

"Prescribe?" said Normanby; "certainly, with

pleasure, and feed your mental pulse. Here! here! a florid, with visions of a fair oval face, silky hair, a deep yet clear soprano voice, and eyes that—aré indescribable. Very bad symptoms of an ordinary case. Now for the prescription. Take one horse at eleven o'clock to-morrow, and ride over to Dingley Hall."

Lord Craven flushed for a moment, and his eyes, which was fixed with an amused expression upon his friend's face, fell to the ground.

"By Jove, you're right, Nor! I am bored—this racing month has been overdone. I want a change and—I'll ride over and see Sir Edward Seymour."

"And of course if Miss Olive comes in you'll want your eyes?"

"No," laughed Lord Craven. "I'll welcome the fair vision."

"And either cure or kill yourself," put in Normanby. "Well, the five minutes are up, and now by your leave—"

"One moment—you can sleep all day to-morrow if you like—but did you mean by that jest of yours respecting Miss Seymour?"

"I'm in earnest. She's disposed of."

"To whom?" asked Lord Craven, his eyes discovering his earnestness."

"To my estimable and admirable friend, Morgan Verner, of the Grange, Deane Hollow, in this county!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord Craven.

"That's the word which, I believe, every man uses when he hears that a woman he admires is about to marry some other man."

"But," said Lord Craven, then he paused and took a few steps round the room and suddenly stopped opposite Normanby, who had risen and was lighting an Etruscan lamp. "Normanby."

Normanby looked up, and immediately lowered his eyes, for there was in them a surprise which he did not choose that any man should think him guilty of.

Lord Craven's face was pale, his lips closely set, his dark, thoughtful eyes stern and fixed with a desire of hidden passion.

"Normanby, is this true? No more jesting; I beg. You think you know me; if you do you know that popular trick with which nature endows me of covering a thing which lies just without or just within my reach. That did on me now and your words have brought it on. Five minutes ago I admired the girl you spoke so lightly of; now I swear I love her! My heart—my soul—my what you like—has been touched by that fatal curse of mine, and I swear that if I can win her by fair means, I will do so, though I lost this right hand in the battle. Come, one word more. You have given my mind to another any engagement between her and—Morgan Verner?"

"At present none," replied Normanby. "But the father—"

"Thanks," broke in Lord Craven, with a peculiar smile, which was a glimpse of the firm, dauntless resolution of the inner man. "I am satisfied. Normanby, I have an object now, and that is to win Olive Seymour for my wife."

"Or admit that you have failed in one thing at least," broke in Normanby, softly.

"Good-night. With your resolution, my dear father, I could discover a new world, or conquer the old one!! and with the most fleeting of smiles the man of the world slowly departed for bed."

Arrived at the suite of apartments which had been prepared for him, Julius Normanby, who for reasons of his own did not employ a valet, slowly divested himself of his exquisitely fitting coat, and, although he had so emphatically pronounced upon the evils of thinking, seemed deep in some calculation, for with a face in which the gray eyes shone keenly and suspiciously under the long lashes, he looked into his mirror, muttering :

"The battle has begun; yes, I thought I could sound the charge—and now, my dear Julius, which side do you take? You have no money, you desire some, you stand on a precipice which may slip and let you into the abyss; you hanker after firm ground. Which shall it be, the banner of Morgan Verner, or the device of my Lord Craven. Shall we toss, Julius?" and he took a coin from his pocket.

"No, we will wait—wait, for he who waits," says the excellent proverb, "must win"; so, my good general, here is an adroit ally at the service of the strongest!"

And with a serene smile the man of the world pocketed the coin and retired to rest.

Meanwhile, quite unconscious of the new complication which had arisen to entangle the web of her destiny, Olive sat beside her father in the carriage which was bearing them home.

Sir Edward was in the best of spirits, occasioned by the half murmured admiration of his darling which had been poured into his willing ear.

He peered through the darkness into the far corner in which Olive's light silk glimmered hazily, and

wondered what he had done to deserve so great a gift from heaven.

Mingled with his paternal pride was an unexplainable feeling that the news which he had heard that night from Morgan Verner would distress his darling, and was trying to decide whether he should tell her now or wait until the morning.

"Better get it over at once," he thought, and so after putting it off until almost the last moment, when the carriage was wending through the park, he said suddenly,

"Are you asleep, my darling?"

"No, papa," replied Olive.

"You are very tired, I am afraid," he said as anxiously as if she were a child of ten.

"Indeed no," said Olive. "Don't you know, papa, there are two things of which women never tire—the dance and the dress?"

Sir Edward laughed.

"And you have had so little of the first, my darling. I have been so selfish! But we will arise and shake the sloth from us now, and let a little light and laughter into our lives at the hall. Olive, dear, I have some disagreeable news for you."

"Yes, papa," said Olive. "Tell it me."

"Your protege, Reuben, has been getting into trouble, the young vagabond."

"Papa, should we prejudice any man?"

"No," said Sir Edward. "But I am so vexed with him, for I must confess I took a great fancy to him myself. He seemed so honest and nice a lad: now he has ruined himself for life."

"For life?" murmured Olive.

"Yes, I am afraid so. I got the particulars from Mr. Morgan Verner. It seems—does it trouble you, Olive? I won't go on if it does: I thought you would rather know—"

"Yes, yes," said Olive. "Papa, I do know—I—I overheard Mr. Verner talking to you."

Sir Edward sighed with palpable relief.

"Then, my dear, then we will say no more. I will go over and see what can be done for him to-morrow, and, if I can, pack him off to Australia."

"Australia!" said Olive in a low voice.

Sir Edward nodded. The carriage had stopped, and Olive without a word put her hand upon his arm and alighted.

"Why, my dear, your hand quite trembles. I am sure you are tired," he said affectionately.

"Well, I think I am, papa," she said; "and I will go up at once. Good night."

And, throwing her arm round his neck, she drew him to her and kissed him; then, before he could see her face, she had glided past him to the stairs.

At the door of her dressing-room stood Topsy, her face all smiles, her eyes all tears.

"Oh, miss," were her first words, "I am so glad you've come back! How tired you look, and—"

"Topsy," said Olive, drawing the girl to the light quietly, "you have been crying. Come, tell me."

"No, I haven't, miss," said faithful Topsy, comencing at once. "Yes, I have, Miss Olive. And who could help it—it is so dreadful!"

"What?" asked Olive, looking at her with a half-smile.

"Why, miss, they have taken Reuben to prison!"

At the words Olive felt a sharp pang, which was as now to her as it was strange to her and unaccountable.

"Topsy, you shall tell me all to-morrow," she said.

"Good night."

And with a gentle look she dismissed her, not daring to show how deeply she also was affected by the misdeeds of the handsome youth who had promised so fairly and failed so woefully.

Topsy departed—half-glad, half-sorry to go—and Olive slowly unbosomed her hair.

"Why should I feel this so?" she asked herself, with innocent wonder. "How hot the room seems. My brain feels in a whirl—one look at the moon. I cannot think to-night. Poor Reuben—ruined for life, papa said!"

She opened the casement and looked out, and as she did so started, for in a bright patch of moonlight was the bent and twisted figure of Weelsy, the gipsy, creeping or crawling towards the house.

To close the window was her first impulse, her next was to draw aside the blind and watch the mysterious movements of the old man.

"What does it all mean?" she asked herself, her heart beating. "I am not afraid—why should I be? Shall I call for some one? No, let me wait and watch!"

She did so, and saw the twisted figure make its way to the gravel path against the house. There the old gipsy stopped and, taking up a handful of the small gravel, threw it against a window.

With surprise and curiosity predominating over her fear, Olive opened the casement and listened.

"Whose window could it be and with whom had the gipsy such mysterious business."

Three minutes passed, and then Olive heard a voice say, in tremulous accents:

"Who is there?"

It was Topsy's! and Olive's heart seemed to stand still while she waited for the answer, which came, in Wolia's hoarse, hushed voice:

"Remember your promise on your honour as a woman. Keep silence!"

To be continued.)

THE PRIDE OF MAPLE LAWN.

"T'WAS a beautiful inland stream that flowed by rich, yellow cornfields and meadows of purest green, in its tortuous course toward the sea.

Miles and miles away it mingled with salt water, and was lost in its wide expanse, but here it rippled sweetly along, and glistening like a line of diamonds set in emeralds and topazes.

It was the pride of Maple Lawn, this little river.

In summer snowy sails dotted its bosom, and in winter its congealed surface was alive with merry skaters.

This day the June sunshine caused each ripple to scintillate with beauty, or perhaps, I should have said each wave, for there was a lively breeze. But there was only one boat on its waters—a fact of rare occurrence—and that was skimming along like a bird, the spray dashing from its bows, and the white sail filled smooth.

In the stern, with the tiller in his left hand, and his right near the cleats, sat a youth of almost effeminate beauty, which was only relieved by the firm lips and bright, steady eyes.

At his left on the port side was a young girl, not beautiful, but possessing an irresistible power of attraction in her calm, tender face and large brown eyes.

Her lips, red as the ruby, and delicately curved, were just apart, revealing the tips of her white, even teeth.

"Isn't it lovely, Nellie?" said the youth, glancing at the glistening spray and the singing waters.

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice, as she gazed upward at the clear, azure sky, and then looked down over the warm, rich country, fertile in fruit and beauty.

"We have known each other ever since we were children, Nellie; and we have never exchanged an unpleasant word, never," he continued, slowly, as if the reflection made him happy.

She smiled that glowing, sympathetic smile which was beauty in itself, and bent her brown eyes upon him.

It was answer enough—he did not care for words—he could read a sweater answer in her glance.

"It would be hard to separate now, to sunder all the dear old ties, and have no future to look forward to—no future wreathed with the flowers of the past, wouldn't it, Nellie?"

His voice was modulated again to that yearning tone as he uttered the last words.

"Yes, Rupert," she answered frankly, a faint colour stealing over her face.

"We could never be happy, I think, neither of us, if we should try to forget our life here and the bright hours we have passed together. It seems to me that our lives have already become part of each other. Why, we never see a book, an animal, or even a curious cloud on the sky, but that we must have each other's opinion of it before it becomes beautiful to us. Our tastes, our thoughts, our hopes are entwined, and may I never live to see them torn apart—that's all."

It was the rapture of a young, innocent heart, uncorroded by the cares of the world.

Nellie Hanover averted her head that he might not see the great tear drops in her eyes. His words found an echo in her own nature. In their years of close companionship, she had given her first, best, and purest love to Rupert Maylie.

"If there is anything true in this world—some people say there is not, you know—it must be our love for each other, Nellie; and I don't believe that time or distance will break it. There must be some redeeming quality in weak human nature, and that must be love. We can't have peace without love. You know, I know, that we are dearer to each other than life itself, and, knowing this, we cannot but remain true. I wouldn't bind you by a promise in set words to remain true to me, because I believe nothing would make you do otherwise, and I am sure you feel the same towards me."

"Are you going away, Rupert?" she asked tremulously.

"Yes, to-morrow," he replied, in a hoarse voice, and then he arose, loosened the lanyard from the

cleats, and springing forward, eased the shoulder and tools in the sail.

Nellie burst out weeping with a childish abandonment to grief that was touching from its very innocence.

Her true, simple heart knew no disguise; her nature, obedient to natural feelings untarnished by polite deceit, sought solace in tears.

Rupert, struggling to maintain his composure, seated himself in the waist and shipped the oars. He must have something to take his attention from Nellie's cries and his own sad thoughts, and so he rowed with a sort of desperation, until he came to the little inlet opposite the maiden's home. Guiding the frail craft towards its mooring-place, he drew in his oars and leaped ashore. Not until the boat was made fast, and he ready to help Nellie out did he speak, then he begged her not to weep, and nearly choked himself in forcing the words from his lips.

"I can't help it, Rupert," she exclaimed, as she placed her hand in his and stepped upon the land, then she covered her face again, and he, winding his arm around her waist, guided her to the little grove just behind the house.

Here they sat down upon a rustic seat. Minutes passed in silence.

"I shall come back, Nellie, and then we shall be happy, for we shall never part again. It is true it will be a long time, two or three years perhaps, and great changes may take place, but I shall think only of you, and of the little home we are to have, where we shall be as happy as two people can be on earth. It will all come, darling. I believe it to the depths of my soul. We have only to be patient a little while," he said, pressing her slight form close to him.

She uncovered her face and tried to smile, but the effort ended in a sigh.

"I shall write to you every week, and oftener if I can, and tell you my prospects, and in thinking of the joy to come you will shorten many long hours. You see, dearest, there are no griefs without some rays of gladness," he continued caressingly.

Her cheeks reddened with a grateful flush, her eyes shone upon him with devotion in their clear depths.

He gazed upon her with veneration, as if she were indeed a creature of ethereal mould, and then he embraced her again with all the fervour of a yearning heart.

The setting sun crimsoned the west with his parting rays.

"I must now leave you, my beloved," said Rupert, arising; but still holding her quivering hands in his. "We have memories of the past to cheer us, and hopes of the future to repay us for the sad present. There, I must cease or I shall lose my voice—man as I am. Good-bye, dearest."

She was still and pale now, and her features gleamed cold with grief.

She shivered as his last warm kiss greeted her, and then, turning into another path, she walked slowly toward home, her eyes downcast, her hands clasped firmly together.

* * * * *

"It is the only way, my child!"

John Hanover uttered these words in a low, wailing voice, and gazed upon his daughter in mingled supplication and despair.

She stood before him like a statue, her arms folded across her breast, her lips firmly compressed, and her white face rigid with a terrible sorrow.

"It's the only way," he went on, frantically. "I am ruined! I strove for money—I have reaped dis-honour. I am an old man, I have but few years left, and unless you marry Martin Farnsworth, I shall spend those few years in prison—my name and family disgraced for ever!"

"Great Heaven! is it so bad as that?"

"Yes—one breath would hurl me into a felon's cell. It is appalling, it is maddening; it is true, I confess it with shame, for I am an old man, and years should have made me stronger and nobler, but—"

He paused, a spasm of pain distorted his features, his hands clenched his white hair, and tears rolled down his wrinkled cheeks.

Nellie shuddered, and her blood seemed to turn to ice in her veins.

The sweet past seemed a field of the dead strewed with blighted hopes.

She saw her only parent bowed with an awful grief, and she the only one who could save him, but—at the sacrifice of her conscience, heart, and earthly happiness.

Was it right to ask so much?

"Will you do it? Think how I have loved you how I have nourished you in my heart," he cried, placing his quivering hands on her shoulder and gazing wildly into her face. "Will you keep me from prison—from an infamous death?"

It required all her strength for the girl to control herself.

Years had given her fortitude, else she would have gone mad under this mental strain.

"Let us talk calmly, father. One hour can make no difference in the result either way. Tell me exactly how you are situated."

"I have overdrawn my bank account to a large amount and sunk it in speculation. Farnsworth is manager of the bank. He holds me in his grasp. But why repeat these harrowing details? I cannot consider them—it racks my brain. Speak, Nellie, it is useless to argue."

"Be patient, please. This house and land will bring more than that."

"Oh, you will craze me, girl—you pierce my heart with your ignorant words. This place is mortgaged and has been for months. I can't sell it—I am hemmed in—I have no other resources but you."

"I must bury my very life and yield myself up to a stranger as a ransom for your liberty! Father, in your sorrow, do you give one thought to the sacrifice you ask of me?"

"Of course I do; but you are young and you will learn to love him. You will forget your infatuation for Maylie and rejoice in having saved your poor old father and his name from blemish."

"Oh, Heaven, give me wisdom!" cried Nellie, working her fingers together and raising her eyes upward imploringly.

John Hanover gazed upon her tremulously, his lips parted, and his breath came thick and fast. He could not look into her heart, and see the struggle there; he could only think of his own peril, and his natural desire to keep his name unstained.

Moments passed, and the girl yet stood silent and prayerful.

"Oh, child, don't prolong this agony—don't! I wish I had another chance, but I have not—I have not," he moaned, plaintively.

"Father," she said, her voice clear and firm, "I have looked at this in its every phase. What you ask of me is wrong. I love you, but I must be just to myself. One has no right to ask another to sacrifice all that earth holds dear, that one may escape the consequences of one's own acts. I seem harsh. I am only practical. I will share your grief with you, but I cannot sell myself, and break my plighted troth. No, Heaven requires no such sacrifice from woman—it is wicked."

"Then you will see me dragged away and imprisoned! Oh, thankless child! I did not think you would desert me!"

"Stop! I have not deserted you, neither do I intend to do so. You think me selfish, but never dream that you were selfish in asking this monstrous sacrifice. What has woman to hope for in this world but love? Oh, father, reproach me not, lest your own words make you miserable!"

Was this strong, brave woman the little Nellie of five years ago?

Ah, how nobly had grown those little qualities which were then hidden, but now shone forth in majestic grandeur.

"I will tell you what we are to do. Have the house sold, pay off the mortgage, leave the surplus for Farnsworth, and we will seek another country."

"What? You are losing your reason. Do you counsel me to fly like a thief? Are these my daughter's words?"

"Dishonour must come. I am willing to share it with you. Were I a parent my own disgrace would be preferable to such a course as you have proposed. Seek not to distort my words: I choose the lesser evil. I will escape with you from the clutches of this rapacious man, who makes you need the price of your daughter's lifelong happiness. I will beat with you poverty, odium, misery, but I will nor sacrifice my woman's heart."

Her slight form expanded, her face glowed with the inspiration of her resolution, her eyes gleamed brilliantly, and her little hands, clasped as if in prayer, showed where her faith and consciousness of right were anchored.

"Then adieu to everything I have held dear. Your father becomes a fugitive—a hunted criminal at your behest."

"And I share the infamy," she answered, composedly.

"Do you dream, foolish girl, that Rupert Maylie will ever look at you, much less love you after this?"

"I believe in his truth. If he should prove treacherous, that would not make my action wrong. Whatever comes, I shall have no remorse."

"Your trust is childish," he exclaimed, in mingled anger and grief. "You wreck your family name for a weak, selfish passion. Well, let it be so, but when I'm gone, you will repent and think of my anguish."

"Is not mine as great? Oh, father, forget not my suffering in nourishing your own!"

Her father bent his head upon his hands, and groaned aloud.

He could not see that her sorrow and disgrace came of his act, that they would last through more years than his; he only felt his own needs.

No more was said, and Nellie went to her own room to reflect in solitude upon the great and terrible change that was about to come on her life.

The day following, Mr. Hanover made his arrangements to carry out his daughter's advice, but with shame, regret, and dismay.

He was still blind to her feelings, and thought she had acted ungratefully.

In the afternoon, much to her astonishment and terror, Mr. Farnsworth called, and Nellie was summoned to the library.

There was no appeal now; the man had suspected that John Hanover was trying to outwit him, and he was determined to have the affair settled at once. The crisis had come unexpectedly, but it must be met.

Nellie, very pale, but composed, entered the apartment, and bowed with cold reserve, to the bank manager.

Her father, anxious and tremulous, regarded her beseechingly.

"I suppose it is needless to make any extended explanation," said Mr. Farnsworth, politely; but with a certain exultation in his tone. "I am here to solicit your hand in marriage, Miss Hanover. As you are aware, I am a man of position and great wealth—"

"Then give my father one month to raise money to pay your claim," interposed Nellie, fearlessly.

"Pray don't intrude matters of business just at this time," he resumed, smiling. "I offer you my hand. I crave your answer."

"For Heaven's sake, Nellie," remember me," whispered Mr. Hanover, his face ghastly, his form shaking like a leaf.

"I ask a week for consideration, sir, at the same time thanking you for the honour you would confer upon me," she rejoined.

"You can have one hour," said the suitor, with a mocking bow; "at the end of that time, I shall return to this room for your answer. Mr. Hanover, we will leave the lady alone, if you please."

The father arose and accompanied his master from the room.

Nellie sank into a chair and pressed her hands to her brow.

What should she do? The hope of escape had been even sweet compared with the alternative, but now it was thrust back upon her. Unable to bear alone the tumult of feelings that racked her heart and brain, she dropped upon her knees and prayed with all the fervour of a pure and devout heart. A half hour passed. She looked up and beheld a strong, handsome man standing before her, his eyes bent upon her affectionately. Was it a dream. She knew that face, though time had placed its disfiguring marks upon it, yet she could not speak—her voice seemed lost in the wonder that flooded her mind.

"Nellie, my own sweet love. My little Nellie!"

"Oh, Rupert!"

She flew to his arms and nestled her head upon the breast where in childhood she had rested when tired with play, when in girlhood she had felt the first impulse of love, and where now in grief she found the first moment of comfort that had been hers for months. But it lasted only a few minutes, then her distracting thoughts returned in full force, and she glanced apprehensively at the clock. It lacked but five minutes of the hour. Hurriedly she told her lover of the position in which she was placed, and begged his advice. He had not the time to answer, as the door was pushed open, and Mr. Farnsworth entered. Pausing on the threshold and gazing at the lovers with disdain, he said:

"Ah! I really beg pardon. It would be superfluous to ask for an answer under the circumstances, Miss Hanover. I regret that your father must—You understand of course."

Mr. Hanover was directly behind him, and as he heard these words his spirit sank within him.

"Stop one moment, Mr. Martin Farnsworth," interposed Rupert, coming forward. "I have a word to say. John Hanover owes nothing to you or your bank. I have a certificate to that effect in my pocket."

"Very glad, I'm sure."

"Yes, doubtless. Look at me again. You know me now. I saw your wife just before I came away—"

"Insolence! Be careful, sir."

"Don't bluster or brag. I had occasion to chastise you once, and if you tempt me, I'll do it again."

I am boyish yet in some respect. Now listen to me. You have done decently well since you have been here and your money has got you a position, but you have treated your wife shamefully. She is a good, noble woman, and if you don't return to her and behave yourself, I'll make the place too hot to hold you, within twenty-four hours. When I say something, you know I mean it. Don't let me hear any evasions or threats, but tell me if you will do as I command."

"Yes, but you'll hear from me again, Rupert Maylie!" hissed Farnsworth, clutching his hands.

"Bah! Leave us and be cautious how you act."

With a muttered anathema, the discomfited suitor withdrew, and Mr. Hanover glanced from his daughter to Rupert in amazement.

"You placed the money to papa's credit, didn't you, Rupert?" queried Nellie, the lovelight shining softly in her brown eyes.

"Yes, darling. I found out this affair in a singular way. One of the tellers of the bank—an acquaintance of mine—wrote to me of the circumstance, and I resolved to come on at once. How did I get so much money? Fortune has been lavish of her favours. I am a partner in a large mercantile house; and besides, an uncle left me quite a large property. I told you, my beautiful, my blessed, that we should be happy."

"And you deserve to be, my noble boy," said Mr. Hanover, grasping his hand. "The logic of events has proved my Nellie right. Heaven bless you both."

And Rupert returned to town with Nellie as his bride.

me in atonement for the past and preparation for the future."

Gladys only clasped his hand with murmured, half intelligible thanks, and he went on, with grave and dignified solemnity:

"Lord Dupuy, I once before offered to you our heiress daughter as a mode of retrieving your family's embarrassments," he said, "and though I was disappointed, grievously disappointed in what I planned and desired by your refusal, yet in that, as so many other events of life, good has come out of evil. I can now trust you more fully if you do reply to my proposal in a different way. I know that you are too honourable to purchase exemption from difficulties even at such a price. Will you reject this dear girl, my own noble, devoted nurse, my forgiving child, even though she has a noble fortune at her disposal, and will you be forced to owe your relief to a woman and a wife?" he added, with a smile that was touching in its half-playful sadness.

Cecil could not speak for a few moments. Then he said, hoarsely:

"Sir Lewis, your daughter would be my choice had I been a prince, and her hand the greatest blessing man could receive. But if it is to disinherited Oscar, your rightiful heir, I cannot, I dare not accept the precious boon. Gladys, my heart's love, am I not right? Do I not speak your own general feelings?" he asked, chokingly.

"Yes, yes, Cecil, if it were so," she said, eagerly. "But, thank Heaven, that is not so. It is all independent of my father or of our dear Oscar. It is the gift of a noble and true-hearted man, who has tended and loved me even in death."

And in a few scarcely intelligible words she related to the astonished Cecil what had occurred during the last startling days.

It was indeed a crowning bliss to the lovers, so long hopelessly parted, so long suffering from hardship and alarm; but it was a scene rather to be imagined and witnessed than to be described, and it were but intruding on the reader's patience to attempt to bring before him the broken sentences, the protestations, and the deep, hidden joy of the next hour.

Better far to pass over that romantic, fairy-like period which occurs in the lives of most in some degree and to take up the thread where it more entirely commands itself to the feelings of the more prosaic and practical.

"Then I may consider it as an arranged fact. I have not to look elsewhere for a guardian and protector to my daughter," said Sir Lewis, with a faint smile. "You will not fail in the hour of need or of joy. Is it not so, Cecil?"

"No, no, no; as Heaven is my helper and my witness," returned the young man, solemnly. "It is but that I fear I shall never be able to return the joy and the benefits that you and yours are conferring on me, Sir Lewis. My whole life will not be sufficient to speak and to prove my gratitude and love. But if to surround my darling with all that can make her life a fairy charm is enough, it shall never be wanting on my part. Sir Lewis, I feel as if I were but in a trance, I cannot realise my own happiness," he went on, eagerly.

"It is but a blind wizard who is the enchanter," said Sir Lewis, sadly smiling. "But that you may be in some measure satisfied in the truth of what I have asserted, Lord Dupuy, I have still one more personage in the drama to bring on the scene, one more confession to make, ere I yield myself up to the inevitable Providence to which I commit my future life."

He rang the bell that was always within his reach, and which was of course promptly answered.

"Desire the gentleman just arrived to walk in," he said, with a significant air, to the servant.

And ere many moments the door opened, and the astonished eyes of his companion rested on the familiar features of Oscar Vandeleur!

There was a dead silence.

Gladys scarcely dared to trust her voice or to break the spell, and Lord Dupuy extended his hand in mute welcome to the unlucky victim of the mysterious hatred of a parent.

Sir Lewis was the first to speak.

"Is it Oscar, my only son?" he asked, holding out his hand.

And Oscar, almost in the words of Scripture to the blind Isaac, replied:

"Here I am, my father—your only son."

Sir Lewis laid his hand on the young man's head as he knelt before him.

"Oscar, my son, can you from your very heart pardon and cast into oblivion the injuries I have poured on your head?" he asked, solemnly.

"Father, it is for me to humble myself and confess what has been my past disgrace and transgression," returned Oscar. "I will not belie myself, I will not deny the truth. But from my inmost heart I say, 'I

have sinned before Heaven and thee, and from this hour I will strive to merit being called thy son."

There was moisture in the baronet's sightless eyes, and there were suppressed sobs in the heart and breast of his daughter at the words.

Then Gladys eagerly interposed.

"Dearest father, if I may venture to ask one favour from your goodness," she said, softly, "I would ask but the privilege of paying back to that dreadful man all that was advanced, however shamefully intended, to his account. There should be no suspicion, no power of blaming a Vandeleur as a debtor for a single shilling," she added, proudly.

"But, my child, you forget. Surely if it was advanced to Oscar, it should come from Oscar's means," returned Sir Lewis, doubtfully.

"Father, the noble heart which is now silent in the grave desired to perform this deed," she returned, firmly; "it is from his wealth that I would have it repaid. Let Oscar resume his place in your house and heart without one cloud and clog to mar his free happiness."

The soft pleading voice, the touch of the gentle hand, were irresistible.

"You have earned your right to act in this matter my child!" was the grave response.

And the young brother and sister clasped hands in the full and unrestrained joy and safety of that complete union of hands and hearts.

"There is but Wanna wanting now to our happiness and amity!" said Gladys in a gentle deprecating tone.

But the sudden flush and angry curl of her father's lips warned her to forbear.

There were limits beyond which even she could not pass.

"Listen to me, my children," resumed Sir Lewis after a pause. "I have had so sharp and bitter a lesson of the uncertainty of all earthly things that I would not willingly trust to the future, however sure and obvious it may appear. It will be long ere it would be possible to celebrate a wedding such as might befit a long descended earl and an heiress, like my Gladys," he went on. "But, if it were even now possible to get over that difficulty, there are yet long weeks of suffering and of doubt ere my sight can be restored to me so as to assist at such a ceremonial. Why not let it be hastened as it was in the case of the Lady Edith Dupuy? Why not give me and yourselves the safety and repose of an irrevocable bridal, however private and unpretending?"

Gladys did not reply in any mode that could have been intelligible to the darkened vision of the sufferer.

But her warm blush—the unrestrained flush of joy that beamed from her eyes and the shy glance at her betrothed, was sufficient.

Lord Delmores had no doubt or fears in his eyes of the acceptance of such an offer.

And Oscar, in the penitent softness and generosity of his heart, could scarcely refrain from the expressions of deep thankfulness at such a security for his beloved and noble-hearted sister's safety.

His own life was clouded and marred in its sunshine; but in a manner by his own wild recklessness. And it was not for him to prevent the bliss of his devoted and noble-hearted sister.

"Let it be at once, let it be at once. And then there will be no hindrance to your attending to your own welfare, dear Sir Lewis," said Lord Delmore, eagerly. Gladys, can you trust me with your own dear and precious self without further delay than may be needful for the wealth that you will bring, and which shall be arranged as your father desires?" More than that even I am powerless to say," he added, mournfully.

Gladys did not say what she so fully and deeply felt, that her whole unexpected wealth was but as dross save in its use to those she loved.

But her shy smile, her extended hand, and her whispered "As you will, dear Cecil," spoke sufficient for her lover's satisfaction.

And then they left the father and son to the new and strange happiness of reconciliation, and for a brief space tasted that bliss which in its new and bright freshness can be enjoyed but once in a life-time.

Days had lengthened into weeks. The party from the hall had carried out their intention of repairing to London for the most skilful advice as to Sir Lewis Vandeleur's sight.

Gladys had only waited for the invalid's consent to the quiet bridal which was to transform her not only into a titled and honoured peeress, but the wife of the only man she had ever loved.

And that opinion was given after long days of waiting and expectation.

"Sir Lewis, we can do something for you; we can

partially restore the sight you have lost, and give you at least the blessing of seeing the light," was the grave and kindly spoken opinion of the celebrated physician who had been called into the consultation.

"But a perfect cure is simply impossible, and it is no use to deceive you by such a promise."

Sir Lewis bowed his head meekly.

"I thank Heaven for such a mercy," he said. "It is more than I really merit from this indulgent pardon of my sins. And how long am I to expect you will need my presence in London?"

"Perhaps three months. Scarce more than that time, Sir Lewis," was the reply.

"It is enough. Thank you. I shall be entirely at your command. It were well for me, perhaps, had I always been as reasonable," returned the baronet, with a melancholy smile. "From this time I place myself completely under your guidance and directions till the treatment is finished."

The oculist spoke a few encouraging words and took his leave.

No sooner were they alone than the baronet again resumed the subject to which he had alluded.

"I shall have the power at least of giving you away, my Gladys," he said. "And Oscar shall take your place while the first days of your wedded life are in their new happiness. I have so much to be thankful for that I may well endure the temporary privation?"

"And Wanna, will you not have her once more, now that all danger is past?" asked Gladys, tenderly.

There was a sad struggle in the baronet's mind before he replied.

"As you will. The evils of pride and jealous suspicion and revenge have clouded my mind long enough. I may well have indulgence for her who has in a measure been trained in such evil by my own selfishness."

Gladys kissed him with the warm, loving tears glistening in her eyes.

And then she left him to carry out the anxious desire of her heart and summon Wanna to her former place at her father's side.

It was a holy and reverent spirit that overspread the hearts and minds of the little group assembled in the drawing-room which was the temporary abode of the Vandeleurs.

The bride and bridegroom were too much overjoyed with their own deep love and happiness to need any more adjuncts of pomp or gaiety.

And Oscar and Edith, who stood by them as spectators, were calm and reverent in their mien and their chastened regrets.

Oscar bore nobly and well the sight of the happiness from which he was debarred, and could from his heart desire the bliss of her whom he had loved from his earliest years.

And Edith stood by her husband's side with a wife's troth and a woman's gratified affection, albeit the young and girlish passion that had been so deeply rooted in her nature had been crushed in its early hope and brightness.

It was in his chastened view of all that surrounded him, a fitting recompence for those who had sheltered him by their love, even if the evil consequences of the fate which had been his curse were not altogether conquered, nor its wounds healed.

Five years had passed away since the quiet bridal of Gladys Vandeleur with the Earl Delmores, and they had brought with them all the happiness and more than the prosperity and sweet ties that would be expected to attend the union.

The wealth that had been bequeathed by the deceased lover of the fair young countess had availed to free the noble estates of their burden, while at the same time Lord Delmores had made arrangements to save sufficient from his rent roll to compensate the heiress of such fortune for its free sacrifice.

Each year would see a large deduction from the noble income of the Delmores estates to form a spinster dowry for Gladys, and a portion for younger children.

And these blessings were not denied to the young couple.

Two fair boys and a lovely infant girl were already vouchsafed to grace and cheer their household.

The younger of the boys was christened Oscar, as his brother already bore the names of his father and grandfather, Lewis Cecil, while the baby girl was to secure in the Dupuy line the appellation of its fair aunt Edith.

There was an unusual stir in the castle at the baptism of this little babe.

Oscar Vandeleur, who had been absent for two long years on a tour in the Orient, was expected to return in time for the ceremony.

And Sir Lewis Vandeleur, now restored to the degree of health and of sight which had been promised him, had agreed to meet the returned wanderer, and to witness the entry of his first granddaughter into the Christian Church.

Wanna, now somewhat subdued into outward decorum and courtesy, to her envied relatives, was selected as one of the sponsors.

And in spite of her bitter disappointment and her indignant jealousy of Gladys in her singular good fortune, the younger daughter of the baronet was sufficiently versed in the world and its ways to comprehend what would be the only safe and promising line of conduct for her to adopt.

Ulterior disregard and contempt for the loss of her intended bridegroom and a half-bitter, half-disdaining surprise at her sister's inheritance had been the mood displayed by the gifted but ungenteel daughter of Sir Lewis.

And Gladys was blast enough to afford a noble and sympathizing kindness rather than any harsher feeling for her piqued and resentful relative.

Thus the day drew near for the holy rite.

To be continued)

PAUPER CHILDREN IN METROPOLITAN DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

The paper boarding school of the metropolis ("District Schools") contain eight thousand children, who cost £33,000 per annum, or, on the average, 22s. per child (nearly 9s. per week). The cost in particular schools varies greatly. At St. Pancras each child costs nearly 37s.; at Lambeth and Mile End, about 17s. At one school (Islington) bacon is charged 6s. per cwt., and 9s. at another (Shoreditch). Cheese costs one school 5s. per cwt., and another 8s. The cod at Marylebone costs more than double that used at the Holborn schools; and the "Central London" schools pay 5s. per ton for potatoes, whilst Mile End only pays 3s. 10s.

In the neighbouring districts of St. George's-in-the-East and Bethnal-green, the average cost of each child for provisions is, in the former 10s., against 3s. 16s. in the latter. This state of things not only shows the need of a single central board of guardians for all London, but it also indicates the very expensive nature of "District School" education as compared with the boarding-out plan. For in Scotland more than 4,500 children are boarded out at less than half the comparative cost of the London children—10s. per annum being a high rate in Scotland. Yet the Secretary of the Scotch Poor-law Board reports most favourably of the moral and industrial, in addition to the pecuniary results of this system. He also shows the great decrease of pauperism in general, concurrently with the extension of this plan.

In 1815 there was 1 pauper in Scotland to every 39 persons. In 1875 there was only 1 pauper to every 51. The "district schools" are, however, far superior to the system of bringing up children with adult paupers, many of whom are wretched exemplars for the young. But, even in the district schools, the children of the virtuous poor are apt to be congregated with those of the most filthy and debased parentage, steeped at an early age in familiarity with the most repulsive evils.

Again, the Metropolitan district schools tend to render pauperism attractive. Thus, Mr. Tarnell boasts of them, that their young inmates are "lodged in magnificent buildings, some of them surrounded by extensive domains, taught by first-rate teachers, each child with its separate bed, weekly bath," etc. In addition, there are regimental bands, swimming baths, and so forth. Thus, advantages are granted to paupers which thousands of struggling ratepayers are unable to procure for their own children. It is true that cooking and washing are taught, but not in the same useful way as in the better class of cottage homes to boarded-out children. The costly kitchen ranges, steam washing apparatus, and other machinery of the large district schools are not calculated to prepare children for using the humble appliances of working men's homes.

On the whole, it appears from a comparison of the Metropolitan District School system with the boarding-out plan, that the latter possesses greatly superior advantages wherever it is conducted (as in Scotland and many other districts) under regular supervision. This is, however, an essential condition of its superiority.

An exhibition of the products of modern manufacturing art will open at Utrecht, Holland, on the 1st of August next, in the edifice for arts and sciences in the garden at the Mariaplaats.

THROWING OLD SHOES.

Very few, probably, of the thousands who throw old shoes after bridal parties as they are leaving home, know anything of the origin of the custom. Like almost all of our common customs, its origin is ancient, and can be traced to the Bible times. It was then the custom for a brother of a childless man to marry his widow, or at least he had the refusal of her. If he chose to reject her, the ceremony was public, and consisted in her loosing his shoe from his foot. His giving up the shoe was a symbol of his abandoning all dominion over her. There was an affair of this kind between Ruth and Boaz.

In some parts of the East it is a custom to carry a slipper before a newly married couple as a token of the bride's subjection. The custom is very old in England and Scotland. The usual saying is that it is thrown for luck, and that is the idea in this country, but originally it meant a renunciation of authority over the child by the parents.

It was formerly a custom among the Germans for the bride, when she was conducted to her bed-chamber, to take off her shoe and throw it among the guests. Whoever got it, in the struggle to obtain it, received it as an omen that he or she would be happily married.

Train, in his history of "The Isle of Man," says: "On the bridegroom leaving his house, it was customary to throw an old shoe after him, and in like manner an old shoe after the bride, on leaving her home to proceed to church, in order to insure good luck to each respectively; and if, by stratagem, either of the bride's shoes could be taken off by any inspector on her way to church, it had to be ransomed by the bridegroom."

In Kent, after the couple have started on their tour, the single ladies are drawn up in one row, and the bachelors in another. An old shoe is then thrown as far as possible, and the ladies then run for it, the successful one being supposed to be the first female to get married. She then throws the shoe at the gentleman, and the one who is hit by it is deemed to be the first male who will enter into wedlock. Generally it is considered the older the shoe the better.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED.

Don't be discouraged if, in the outset of life things do not go on smoothly. It seldom happens the hopes we cherish of the future are realized. The path of life in the prospect appears smooth and level enough, but when we begin to travel it we find it all up hills and generally rough enough. The journey is a laborious one, and whether poor or wealthy, high or low, we shall find it so to our disappointment, if we have built on any other calculation. To endure what is to be endured with as much cheerfulness as possible and to shew our way as easily as we can through the great crowd hoping for little, yet striving for much, is perhaps the true plan.

Don't be disengaged if occasionally you slip down by the way and your neighbours tread over you a little; accidents happen, miscalculations will sometimes be made, things will turn out differently from our expectations and we may be sufferers. It is worth while to remember that prospects are like the skies in April, sometimes clouded and sometimes clear and favourable; and as it would be folly to despair of again seeing the sun because to-day is stormy, so it is unwise to sink into despondency when fortune frowns since, in the common course of things she may be surely expected to smile again.

Don't be disengaged under any circumstances. Go steadily forward. Rather consult your own conscience than the opinions of men, though the last are not to be disregarded. Be industrious, be frugal, honest; deal in perfect kindness with all who come in your way, exercising a neighbourly and obliging spirit in your own intercourse; and if you do not prosper as rapidly as any of your neighbours depend upon it you will be happy.

PARIS EXHIBITION, 1878.

GREAT progress has been made in almost every branch and art of industry since the International Exhibition of 1867, and there can be no doubt that after a lapse of eleven years the public will be delighted to witness another great collection of all the industrial and artistic productions which have come to light during that time. Two years will suffice for the realization of this grand enterprise. The exhibition of 1867 was only resolved upon in 1865, and

it was only in the month of August of the latter year that the plan of the palace was definitely adopted. The selection of a site is a most important matter, and the decision of the sub-commission will have to be well weighed by the superior commission, which will be appointed later. The situation of the building exercises a great influence on the number of visitors, and on the amount of profit which the general mass of humanity derives from the spectacle. In 1862 the exhibition occupied a space of 120,000 square metres; that of 1867 necessitated a covered surface of 150,000 metres. Since 1867 industrial art and agricultural production have been steadily improving all over the world. The commerce of France alone has increased from five milliards eight hundred millions to seven milliards seven hundred millions of francs, a fact which may be accepted as a measure of the impulse given to business by these great international competitions. Taking these facts into consideration, it is evident that a much larger area than the one employed in 1867 will be required. The surface to be occupied in 1878 must be estimated at 225,000 metres.

THE FRENCH OYSTER FISHERIES.

The following information on the subject of oyster-culture will be of interest at the present time, when the oyster fisheries of this country are under the consideration of the House of Commons. The facts are taken from the last report by the French Inspector of Fisheries, M. de Bon, to the Minister of Marine:

The oyster beds under cultivation are generally in a prosperous condition, and have given most satisfactory results. The diminution of 29,130 francs (about 4,000) in the yield of 1874 as compared with 1873 is, in reality, only an apparent decrease, as the beds of Sables d'Olonne, Granville, and La Teste were not worked in the season of 1873-4, as a preparatory measure. The fishing season comprises the months of September to April, inclusive.

As regards the beds of the basin of Arcachon, if they were dredged in the end of 1874 their produce was only accounted for in the returns for next year.

At Cancale, dredging through eight tides yielded 13,455,000 oysters, against 11,300,000 caught in the preceding year. Notwithstanding this large catch large numbers of oysters are left for breeding purposes.

The returns for 1875 showed the effects of oyster culture, at Arcachon especially. In 1874 the success is still more evident, as the following figures testify:

In 1873, 42,342,250 oysters, bred in the parks at Arcachon, were sold, realising 1,736,032 francs (69,441.)

In 1874, 82,345,233 oysters, bred at Arcachon, were sold, realising 2,053,630 francs (82,345.)

Increase in 1874, 40,002,983 oysters, and 12,904.

It will be seen that the 42,000,000 oysters sold in 1873 fetched a proportionately larger sum than the 32,000,000 sold in 1874. The difference is caused by the fact that the price per thousand in 1873 was forty-one francs (3s.), while in 1874 it fell to twenty-five francs (1*l*), in consequence of the abundance of this bivalve. On the other hand, the lower rate has proved even more remunerative to the oyster-breeder than the higher price. The production at Arcachon is so great that the area available is insufficient for both breeding and fattening. Great quantities are sent to Maronne, Oléron, and Saint Jean de Luz, where they are placed in tanks, in which they grow and improve rapidly. In 1877 new oyster-beds were granted in the basin in 1877, bringing up the total number to 2,427. French capital is continually being invested in the business.

The district of Auray supplies very few oysters directly to the markets. The principal industry of this quarter consists in realising an enormous production. The fattening beds there have as yet given only poor result; in fact, there are only two or three apiece, at some distance from the natural oyster-beds, where fattening them is attempted. The production at Auray has been so enormous that an annual yield of over 200,000,000 young oysters may be safely relied on. The price has fallen from 8fr. (8s. 8d.) per 1,000 to 3fr. 50c. and 4fr. (2s. 10d. to 3s. 4d.) a fall which has had the effect of increasing the number of breeding-beds in the neighbourhood, and of attracting buyers from the fattening-beds in all parts. When the latter establishments are in close connection with the breeding-beds, of which they are the indispensable accompaniment, the production of oysters will no doubt be considerably increased, and reduced prices will bring them within the reach of a much larger number of people.

Of the 200,000,000 of marketable ware collected last year at Auray, two-thirds have been actually sold, while the remaining portion are kept back in ponds, where they will be sheltered from the effect of the winter or left on the tiles, and will not be removed till the second year.

THE DEPTH OF THE SEA.

At a meeting of the Royal Society, Mr. Siemens D.C.L., F.R.S., exhibited the instrument he has devised to ascertain the depth of the sea by a new means, without a sounding line. He has worked out the requirements, starting with the proposition that the total gravitation of the earth, as measured on its normal surface, is composed of the separate attractions of all its parts, and that the attractive influence of each volume varies directly as its density and inversely as the square of its distance from the point of measurement. The density of sea water being about 1.026, and that of the solid constituents composing the crust of the earth about 2.763 (this being the mean density of mountain limestone, granite, basalt, slate, and sandstone), it follows that an intervening depth of sea water must exercise a sensible influence upon total gravitation if measured on the surface of the sea. Mr. Siemens showed how this influence can be proved mathematically, in considering, in the first place, the attractive value of any thin slice of substance in a plane perpendicular to the earth's radius, supposing that the earth is regarded as a perfect sphere, of uniform density, and not affected by centrifugal force. It was in 1819 that Mr. Siemens first attempted to construct an instrument based on these principles. The difficulties he then encountered he has since overcome, and the present instrument is the result of his latest work. He proposes to call it a bathometer, and it consists essentially of a vertical column of mercury, contained in a steel tube having cup-like extensions at both extremities, so as to increase the terminal area of the mercury. The lower cup is closed by means of a corrugated diaphragm of thin steel plate, and the weight of the column of mercury is balanced in the centre of the diaphragm by the elastic force derived from two carefully tempered spiral steel springs of the same length as the column of mercury. One of the peculiarities of this mechanical arrangement is that in its perpendicular, the diminishing elastic force of the springs with rise of temperature being compensated by a similar decrease of potential of the mercury column, which decrease depends upon the proportions given to the areas of the steel tube and its cup-like extensions. The instrument is suspended a short distance above its centre of gravity in a universal joint, in order to cause it to retain its vertical position, notwithstanding the motion of the vessel; and vertical oscillations of the mercury are almost entirely prevented by a local contraction of the mercury column to a very small orifice. The reading of the instrument is effected by means of electrical contact, which is established between the end of a micrometer screw and the centre of the elastic diaphragm. The pitch of the screw and the divisions upon the rim are so proportioned that each division represents the diminution of gravity due to one fathom of depth. Variations in atmospheric pressure have no effect on the reading of the instrument, but corrections have to be made for latitude. The instrument has been actually tested in voyages across the Atlantic.

A METRIC TREATY.

The President has recently sent to the Senate for ratification a treaty, the object of which is to establish an international uniformity and precision in the standard of weights and measures. The treaty is between the United States and the governments of Austria, Argentine Republic, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and Venezuela. It contains an agreement between all the parties to maintain in Paris, at the common expense, a permanent bureau of weights and measures, to be under the control of an international committee. The bureau is to be charged with the following duties:

1. All comparisons and verifications of the new prototype of the meter and kilogramme.
2. The custody of the international prototypes.
3. The periodical comparison of the international prototypes and of test copies, as well as comparison of the standards of non-metric weights and measures used in different countries for scientific purposes.
4. The standardizing and comparison of geodetic measuring bars.
5. The comparison of standards and scales of precision, the verification of which may be requested by governments, scientific societies, or even by contractors or men of science.



[THE LETTER RETURNED.]

SIDE BY SIDE.

CHAPTER II.

The day passed. Fortunately, Janet was able to preserve her solitude unbroken till nearly night.

Lady Hammersley was good-natured enough to choose this time, of all others, for the indulgence of a sick headache. She kept her bed, too miserable even to wish even for her favourite's society; half inclined, as she lay, partially dozing, on her pillows, and heard the roar of the sea below the window, to think that she must be in a ship's cabin, rocking up and down upon the troubled waters of the Bay of Biscay; and the delusion rendered her more ill and miserable than ever.

The poor old parrot-beaked bird would have been an appalling object for any creature to contemplate, as she lay there, with her frizzed "front." But luckily there was no one to see her; so, I need not expose the delicate secrets appertaining to an elderly woman's mysterious toilet.

Toward evening, the Baronet's relic found herself somewhat better, and sent to ask Janet if she would go for a drive. It was easier to consent than to find reasons for a refusal. So, she went.

Miss Carrington appeared quite her usual self, so far as ability to talk calmly and be agreeable was concerned; though when dressing, she had been so afraid her ghastly pallor would tell tales that she had asked Mademoiselle Leontine for some of the pink, wherewith that model of all the virtues necessary to a waiting-woman habitually brightened the tint of her sallow complexion.

For the first time in her life, Janet rubbed her cheeks with rouge, till they seemed to her blushing with shame of her weakness.

But her veil was down when she got into the carriage, and Lady Hammersley's eyes were still too drowsy, and her head too painful, for her to notice if her friend had tattooed herself like a South Sea Islander.

The fresh air revived the old lady somewhat, and she began to chatter; of course, after the pleasant habit common to everybody's intimates, selecting the precise subject most distasteful to Janet.

"And what do you think of the minister's friend?" asked Lady Hammersley, abruptly, after she had been roused into scorn and merriment by the remarkable costume of one of her acquaintances, whose carriage they met. Lady Hammersley herself had on a bonnet which looked like a diapitated bird cage, with the tails of two pheasants and a cockatoo's crest hanging out of it; a purple gown, of a tint so excruciatingly bad, that it set one's teeth on edge, and a pair of sea-green gloves hiding her aristocratic hands; but for all that, she could perceive the errors against good taste committed by her countrywomen, and was very severe therupon. "What did you think of him, my dear? That Mr. Lane, or Mayne, or Payne, or whatever his name was?" she continued, with an airy lightness which irritated Janet inexpressibly.

"I did not think about him," the young lady replied.

"Then he did not please you?" pursued the old lady, remembering her fears of the previous night, when she had observed how handsome the man was. "He is not ugly. Somebody said he was a genius. Now, I have a horror of that sort of animal. They are always so erratic; have been so from Solomon down; for I suppose he was a genius, since he wrote poetry."

"Not the surest proof in the world, I should think," returned Janet, disdainfully. "Worth has not sent me that box of dresses, as he promised," she added, rushing off to a fresh subject, with a suddenness which might have been natural in another woman: but Lady Hammersley knew that Janet thought less of such disappointments than many of her sex.

"I should not suppose it could matter much," retorted she, rather crossly. "You have at least a dozen you have never had on."

There was a concert in the evening, and Lady Hammersley was so much brightened up by a good dinner, plenty of champagne and black coffee, that she felt no disposition to remain in her chamber.

The music would sound nicely, and she owed the Austrian general his revenge at piquet. She never could bear to disappoint people.

Besides, it would look as if she really wanted to keep his money if she stayed away.

She found oceans of reasons, and never the real one, which was, that lights, and bustle, and amusement were a necessary part of her existence.

Go she would, in spite of Janet's persuasions; perhaps somewhat selfish persuasions, as Janet had hoped to spend a quiet evening.

But Lady Hammersley would not hear of her remaining upstairs; so, Miss Carrington was forced to change her dress, while her chaperon induced herself in a many-coloured costume she fondly believed perfection.

When the weight of her young mistress's toilet was off her mind, the last pin placed, the last finishing touch given, Mademoiselle Leontine unpuckered her brows, heaved a sigh of exultation, and was able to think of ordinary matters.

"I quite forgot a letter that came while mademoiselle was at dinner," said she. "Mademoiselle knows how I always concentrate my energies; put my soul into the work of dressing mademoiselle So, she will excuse my negligence, I hope."

"It is of no consequence. Where is the letter? I wish there was no such thing in the world," said Janet.

"I will bring it. I left it on the table, in mademoiselle's salon."

"Never mind. I am going in there to sit down till Lady Hammersley is ready," Janet replied.

She passed into the adjoining chamber, went up to the table, saw the letter. She recognized the writing at once. A storm of anger and pain darkened her eyes. She took an envelope from the desk, wrote a name on it, thrust the unopened letter therein, sealed it, and rang the bell.

Her factotum, Old Philip, the faithful creature the sun ever shone on, who served her father before Janet was born, and adored her as Italians do their saints, appeared in answer to her summons.

"Be good enough to find where that person is stopping," said Janet, pointing to the name she had written on the envelope; "and have this given to him at once."

Old Philip bowed, glanced at the address as he took up the epistle, gave his mistress one quick look of troubled surprise, and left the chamber.

As he reached the landing which led to the reading and ball-rooms, he met Harold Payne.

The gentleman called suddenly:

"Philip! It is Philip! How do you do?"

The old man looked at him with angry eyes, and held out the letter.

"My mistress bade me give you this," said he; "but she did not bid me speak to you."

He hurried away.

Payne stood under the chandelier, and opening the envelope, saw his own letter, with the seal intact.

The first part of the concert was nearly over, when Lady Hammersley and Miss Carrington entered the room.

It was all wearisome and odious to Janet. The music sounded harsh and discordant. Even the cheerful talk of her favourite, the minister, was a bore.

But the fault, or the misfortune, was entirely Janet's own; for the concert was a brilliant success in every way.

The Russian Grand Duke had changed his royal mind, and instead of departing that morning, was still in Biarritz, and honoured the affair by his august presence.

So it came about, that Apraxin and Harold Payne met in the billiard-room, and exchanged courteous greetings for the benefit of the bystanders.

"I trust you received my note of explanation," the prince found an opportunity to say in Payne's ear, "and that it was satisfactory?"

"Perfectly so," returned Payne. "I had heard already that your master's son had deferred his departure until to-morrow, so I knew that our little interview must be put off till another day."

"I shall be back to-morrow night," continued the prince, biting his lips under his moustache.

"I believe our two friends have arranged all necessary details," said Payne, calmly. "Good-night, and good-by till we meet at St. Jean de Suz on Saturday."

And he walked away, leaving the haughty Russian noble with an almost uncontrollable desire to throttle him for his languid composure, and envying men in a rank of life sufficiently low for them to adjust their hatreds by choking their enemy's life out with murderous hands, instead of only finding the comparatively tame satisfaction of using pistols and having to wait till polite preliminaries can be

settled and Grand Dukes proved obliging enough to go about their business.

The concert took its course. Between the pieces, people nibbled ices, absorbed cooling beverages, and talked nonsense.

Miss Carrington did her part well enough, and nobody noticed that it was hard work, unless it might be Apraxin.

Several times, as he made one of the little group about, Janet saw his handsome eyes fastened upon her with look of keen observation; but she read other revelations there, too, and they positively frightened her.

She had never believed that his feeling was anything more than admiration, or the sight of a newer face, would obliterate. But now she read that in his eye which she could not mistake. He loved her.

Hard, almost cruel, as she was, in many ways, not from the dictates of her nature, but rendered so by the wearing misery of her fate, Janet always grieved when she chanced to hurt a real, honest affection.

She had very slight faith in men, but she knew that, with all his faults, and they were principally those of temper and pride, Apraxin was honourable and true.

She had known him, now, for a number of months, and many facts concerning him had come to her knowledge, which, sceptic as she was, had given her confidence in his integrity.

And to-night, for the first time, she learned that he really loved her. She looked back on her conduct with remorseful contrition. She had flirted with him. He would have reason to accuse her of coquetry and caprice.

She was very sorry; sorriest of all for his pain when he learned that— She stopped short and said to herself that he was a man any woman might be proud to love. She might if her heart was not cold and dead. In a worldly point of view what more brilliant position could be offered than this? And yet, even if she wished, she dared not accept. Ah! that was the bitterest sting. She dared not! It cut her pride like a knife to remember this!

That she, Janet Carrington, had so misdirected or misnamed her life that she had reason to fear any human creature! To fear.

She almost forgot her suffering in the spasm of wrath which this reflection kindled in her soul.

People were leaving their chairs, moving about in a pause of the mazurka.

She was seated in the inner room, near one of the windows that gave on the terrace. She slipped out—she had hoped unobserved.

But she had scarcely crossed the flags, and was bending over the parapet, looking across the sweep of white sand and the glory of the sea, when she found Apraxin beside her.

"Are you not afraid of getting cold?" he asked. "Shall I bring you a shawl?"

"How could I possibly want a shawl on such a suffocating night?" returned she, unable to repress the irritable response, which sprang only from nervousness.

"It is rather fresh, I think. But you are not well," he said.

"Only cross," she replied. "Not worth talking to. I shall go back into the rooms presently. The music is very good this evening."

She could not easily give him a plainer dismissal; but he paid no attention thereto.

"Tell me what is the matter?" he said, suddenly. "Ah! I thought all these months had made us friends! I know you are either ill, or something troubles you."

"Of course, we are friends; but even friends must not ask questions," she answered, trying to speak playfully. "I ought to have said, must not take fancies. There is nothing the matter, only I am stupid. Let us talk of something more interesting."

"I can only talk and think of one thing," he said.

She knew what was coming now. No escape possible. She would have given this world and the next to find such.

She stepped back and began to walk slowly down the terrace without knowing what she did. He walked on beside her, sufficiently excited not to remember that there was anything odd in her suddenly-commenced promenade.

The terrace is a very long one. From where they had been standing, there was a good hundred feet to cross before reaching the end. A man may say a great deal in the time necessary for traversing that distance, if he be ready with his speech, and Apraxin did not lack words—words that were well chosen and eloquent, and bore the ring of sincerity in their utterance.

She tried several times to interrupt him, but it was perfectly useless. Then a horrible temptation seized Janet Carrington. She realised, even at the instant, what a wickedness it was so much as to in-

dulge it for a single breath, but she was sorely tempted.

When he told her of his love, when she remembered the worldly position he could give her, reflected what a vengeance it would be for the wrong that had long ago been done her, she had a strong impulse in her soul to lay her hand in his, to go forth with him into the new life he offered, regardless of the risk.

The moon was shining almost as brightly as day. They were nearing the end, Apraxin speaking eagerly all the while.

"Don't!" she cried, with a sudden terror of herself. "Don't! I cannot listen—I must not."

But her voice was so low and choked, that he did not catch the words. Probably, if he had, they would have continued just the same.

A great stand of flowering plants, flanked by two tall shrubs, had been taken out of the concert-room to give place for seats, and set on the terrace. They were close to it.

"I only tell you, over and over, the same thing. I love you! Ah, try to care for me! See, take my hand. Give me a little hope that I may one day

As he spoke, Janet Carrington saw Harold Payne behind the screen of plants. He had been leaning over the parapet. He turned at the sound of voices, caught the words distinctly. It was a case where to move was impossible; to step forth, having heard such utterances, would have been a cruelty and an insult. He retreated as far as he could, and stood still.

Janet was between the prince and the stand. He saw nothing, heard nothing, in his eagerness. It seemed to Janet Carrington that seven times seven devils entered her soul. Harold Payne should hear—should be made to believe that she was utterly reckless; ready to dare him to the uttermost, to run any risk to secure a new life—the splendour of the position offered her.

"I tell you, there is a secret in my life," she said, in a clear, audible voice, as if continuing some explanation she had begun before they got near enough for Payne to hear their conversation. "You could not endure that. No woman could ask you to do it."

"I could trust you," Apraxin answered.

His generous answer filled her with contrition toward him. She remembered how cruel it was to torture him thus. But she could not stop—she could not! She could see Harold Payne; see him twist his hands together in a spasm of rage and suffering; could tell, by his face, that he was trying to listen to her; and he should. He should!

"My trust in you has no bounds," Apraxin said. "You could set no condition to which I would not consent."

"Suppose I asked you to kill some one for me?" cried she.

"I would do it."

She burst out laughing. Not she, it seemed to her, but the fiends that had possession of her, laughed aloud.

The sound of that wicked laughter, in a measure, brought her back again to sanity. She trembled violently. A womanly throb of shame and remorse for her wanton cruelty to this man, who loved her, tore her heart.

She seized Apraxin's arm and hurried him back along the terrace, beyond the reach of Payne's hearing.

"Forgive me!" she exclaimed. "Oh, forgive me! I cannot love you! I am not worth loving. Save your heart for a better woman."

"Janet! Janet!" he cried.

"Be still! Not a word more! For God's sake, go away! I believe I am a fiend to-night! Avoid me! Hate me——"

He was staring at her in dumb wonder. She could not finish her passionate words. A gentleman came hurrying toward them from one of the concert-rooms; a Russian belonging to the Grand Duke's suite.

"Monsieur Nordhoff is looking for you," said Janet, with a composure which, following so close upon her excited speech, made her marvel as much as it did the prince.

"Good evening, mademoiselle," said the newcomer. "Apraxin, I beg a thousand pardons; but his Highness is asking for you."

It is all very well to be a great Russian noble for many reasons, but the position has a side which too closely resembles slavery to be pleasant. I should suppose, and the present was a case in point.

"The Grand Duke has received a dispatch he wishes to show you," pursued Nordhoff. "It must be answered at once."

There was nothing for Apraxin to do but to apologise to Miss Carrington and offer his arm. She walked on with the two men to the room she had left, Nordhoff talking idle nonsense, she endeavouring to answer—Apraxin incapable of speech from

excitement and wrath at this interruption, which caused him to anathematize his sovereign's son in the depths of his soul.

When they left her, Janet went in search of Lady Hammersley, whom she found very tired and anxious to go to her room. So the two departed. Janet kissed her good-night, and Lady Hammersley took her aristocratic, weary old body off to bed.

Miss Carrington found the exemplary Leontine dozing over a French novel and dismissed her for the night.

"I can undress myself," she said. "You look tired. Go to bed at once, like a good creature. Ah, do let me alone," she added, with an entreaty, not a command, in her voice, as Leontine began to protest.

That damsel had never seen her mistress in such a mood, and departed without delay.

Miss Carrington never scolded, but, on the other hand, she was always so reserved and stately that Leontine stood in awe of her, and this sudden burst of childish petulance startled the woman.

Janet sat down by the window. She heard the bell of the Casino strike twelve. A sudden restlessness came over her. She felt that she should go utterly mad if she did not get out of the house.

(To be continued.)

THE TURNERS' COMPANY'S PRIZES.

The Turners' Company, according to their custom propose to give this year their silver medals and the freedom of the Company, and of the City of London, to any workman who may send in the best specimen of hand turning in wood, pottery, and diamonds. The competition in wood includes turning in both hard and soft wood. The work must be all hand turning, produced in the lathe without special rest or tool apparatus, and the carving must be the work of the exhibitor. The competition in pottery includes terra cotta, stone, earthenware and porcelain, but all unglazed. The bronze medal of the Company will be given to the competitor second in merit, and the Company's certificate of merit to the third, in each of the above subjects of competition. In addition to this, the Court has placed at the disposal of the judges a sum of 30*l.*, to be distributed, according to their discretion, as money prizes, viz., 15*l.* among the exhibitors in wood, and 15*l.* among those in pottery. In the diamond cutting and polishing competition, the Baroness Burdett Coutts, who is a member of the Company, has placed at the disposal of the Court the sum of 50*l.*, to be distributed in this class among the competitors, according to the discretion of the judges. Specimens of work under this heading will be divided into classes, as follows:—Class A. Brilliant weighing more than one carat. Class B. Brilliant weighing under one carat. Class C. Single cut. Class D. Roses. In each class a prize will be given if the specimens entered are considered worthy, but the first prize of 25*l.* and the silver medal will be adjudged to the candidate who shows the highest excellence of workmanship in the greater number of the above-named classes. In addition to the above-mentioned prize, there will be the bronze medal of the Company and certificates of merit; the remaining 25*l.* will be distributed according to the discretion of the judges. Candidates for the first prize must send in specimens of work in not less than three out of the four classes. For further information as to conditions of competition, application should be made to Mr. R. L. Loveland, Hon. Sec. to the Competition Committee, 4, Hare-court, Temple, London, E.C.

ELECTRIC GAS BURNER.

The National Assembly at Versailles is illuminated by 356 gas burners, and these are lighted by electricity. The apparatus was constructed by M. Gaiffe, who had to deal with a difficult problem, as the burners were too far from each other to communicate the light to each other. The system, which is largely adopted in this and other countries, of heating a platinum wire to redness by means of electric piles, was rejected, as it would have required a number of batteries, yet the lighting would still have been slow, and the wires would be in great danger of being broken when the chandeliers and lustres were cleaned. M. Gaiffe adopted the system of lighting by the spark.

The apparatus consists of—1, a battery, with hydro-chlorate of ammonia and peroxide of manganese; 2, an induction coil; 3, a series of conductors, with a total length of 1,400 metres, so well isolated as to lose none of the charge, although the tension is immense; 4, 355 inflamers, one to each burner; 5, a contact breaker between the battery and the coil; and finally, a distributor worked by hand

which sends the current to the various sets of burners in rotation.

The batteries consist of four couples, 20 inches high, connected together by means of two thick copper conductors. There is a special arrangement for preventing the possible accident of the current not being cut off by the attendant; the apparatus is placed in a kind of press-on cupboard, which is closed by a sliding door, and when the latter is shut it strikes down the lever of the contact breaker mentioned above. A conductor from one end of the coil touches all the lustres; a second, from the opposite end, is attached to an isolated discharging rod, which the attendant holds in his hand. The distributor on which he operates consists of a slab of india-rubber, having eighteen metallic buttons, each connected by a wire with as many lustres.

The conductors are formed of four copper wires with triple covering of gutta-percha, tinned-cord, and india-rubber ribbon. They are supported by vulcanite—Caoutchouc duro—isolators, and at all places where they require to be covered over the parts of wire are enveloped in an additional coating of india-rubber, two millimetres in thickness. The usual illuminators are fixed on a small circular plate, which is placed on the gas-pipe just below the burner; they consist of two pieces of thick iron-wire, bent above, so that their points, which are fitted with strong platinum wire about a quarter of an inch long, are exactly where the explosive mixture of gas and air is formed. The distance between the points is half a millimetre. All the illuminators of the same group are connected with one another and with the conductors, so as to form a circuit with as many breaks as these jets.

Standing in the current of air which feeds the burner iron-wires are kept cool. When the gas is to be lighted, the operator turns it on and waits a few minutes that the air may be driven out of the pipes, places the coil in connection with the batteries, and touches the eighteen metal buttons of the distributor successively with his discharging rod. The whole of the burners are lighted in fourteen seconds. The apparatus has worked for two years without interruption, and the batteries have only expended three kilogrammes of zinc.

STATISTICS.

GREAT DECREASE IN EMIGRATION.—During the past twelve months the emigration from the Mersey shows a falling off, as compared with the year 1874, of 35,903. The total number which left the Mersey during the quarter ending December was 12,132, and of these 7,952 were English, 90 Scotch, 992 Irish, 2,505 foreigners, and 403 whose nationality is not given. These figures show a decrease, as compared with the corresponding quarter of 1874, of 7,500. In December the number of emigrants sailing from the Mersey was 2,270, and of these 1,008 sailed under the terms of the Emigration Act to the United States. Not under the act there sailed 1,069 to the United States, 26 to Africa, 8 to West Indies, 42 to Nova Scotia, 25 Victoria, 34 to East Indies, and 68 to South America—which shows a decrease, as compared with December in 1874, of 1,192.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.—A parliamentary paper relating to the British Museum just issued states that the total number of persons admitted last year to view the general collections (exclusive of readers) was 523,317, including 3,514 admitted on Monday and Saturday evenings from six to eight o'clock from the 8th May to the 15th of August. The number of visits to the reading-room for the purpose of study or research was 105,310, giving an average of 360 daily, and each reader consulted on an average 18 volumes per day. There were added to the library during the year 36,780 volumes and pamphlets, of which 1,731 were presented, 7,223 received in pursuance of the laws of English copyright, 530 received under the International Copyright treaties, and 27,293 acquired by purchase. In the department of prints and drawings, 12,561 acquisitions have been made during the year, the most important of which were obtained by purchase at the sale of the Galician collection in Paris.

SCIENCE.

A WHITE LIGHT FOR DARK ROOM WINDOWS.—At the last meeting of the Ghent section of the Belgian Society, Dr. Van Monckhoven communicated a very interesting and curious fact. Having to darken a room in which to dry carbon tissue and having nothing on hand but red and green glass, and not enough of either to cover the window entirely, he used half of each, alternating it. The result was that at a certain distance from the window

down the red and green lights blended together and formed a white light. This white light has no action on the sensitised carbon tissue. If it should have no action on the sensitised collodion plate, it would be excellent to illuminate our dark rooms. If there should be no difficulty in preparing red and green glass which would transmit no rays having a chemical action, a window might be fitted alternately with red and green panes of smouldering.

DYING UP ON SEA.—An American engineer of extensive, Mr. Spalding, has submitted to the Geographical Commission of Russia a remarkable report on the Caspian and the Black Seas. Mr. Spalding maintains that the Caspian is drying up, and will slowly become a desert, while the diminution of rainfall will destroy the surrounding territories. This, he says, has already occurred in historic times, whole countries having been desolated by the shrinkage of the Caspian. He recommends that a deep and broad cutting should be made from the Caspian westward to a point where it would be five metres below the level of the Black Sea, and a smaller cutting from that point to the Black Sea. The water of the latter, which is 15 metres higher than that of the Caspian, would then cut a deep and broad channel for itself, and refill the Caspian to its old level, giving, in fifty years, straight ocean communication between the Mediterranean and Persia. The distance between the Black Sea and the Caspian is 160 miles. The period required for refilling might be reduced one-half by a cut connecting the Don and the Volga, so that the waters of both rivers, instead of those of the Volga only, might fall into the Caspian. Mr. Spalding calculates that the two cuttings might be finished in six years, but says nothing of the expense, which might, however, be reduced by the employment of steamers and the naval regiments of the army.

CURE FOR SNAKE-BITES.—The following is from an Australian journal; and if it is efficacious, is a simple cure. A settler who can justly quote about twenty years of experience in the Australian bush, recently informed the "Pleasant Creek News" that he had on several occasions tested the efficacy of the wet mud found in swamps and creeks, as a cure for poisonous bites. He speaks from trials made by himself, and by others, witnessed by him. It is alleged that the mere robbing of wet mud over the part bitten by a tarantula, centipede, scorpion or other venomous insect, is as certain a cure as can be applied to such a class of wounds.

RAPIDITY OF FILTRATION.—Dr. Fleitmann has called attention to the fact not generally known that, contrary to what at first sight might be expected, filtration is much more rapid through thick paper than through thin; and that it is almost twice as rapid through a double filter as through a single one, and still more rapid through a triple one. He says that he has taken advantage of this fact for a number of years, by employing in quantitative analyses a filter of heavy paper beneath the thin one.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE death is announced from Stuttgart of Herr Julius Goettermann, the celebrated violin player and composer.

A TELEGRAM from Rome states that Queen Isabella has addressed a letter to the Pope, in which she offers to intervene with her son, King Alfonso, with regard to the religious question in Spain.

THE freedom and livery of the "Turkers' Company has been presented to Lieutenant Cameron for his recent exploration of the African continent; and to Dr. Atherton, a distinguished geologist, for his discovery of the Diamond Fields of the southern part of Africa.

There has just been discovered at the Louvre the real portrait of the great anatomist André Vesal, known by the famous engraving of "The Lesson of Anatomy." It is the work of Jean Calcar, the designer of the anatomical plates of Vesalius. The illustrious surgeon is represented at the age of twenty-six, leaning on a column. On a ring of his left hand the following inscription has been made out:—"A. V. B. Andreas Vesalina Bruxellensis," clearly establishing the authenticity of the picture.

THE Academy states that a society has been formed for the purpose of photographing relics of Old London. The subjects chosen for this year's issue are:—(1), Old Houses in Wych-street; (2), (3), (4), Old Houses in Drury-lane; (5), Lincoln's-inn Gate-way; (6), Lincoln's-inn—old chambers.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.—The financial statement of Sir William Muir was published on the 31st ult. It is thus summarised in a Reuter's telegram:—The accounts for 1874-75 show a total revenue of 50,500,474. The ordinary expenditure during the same period amounted to 30,251,947, including

2,287,860/- for the Famine Relief Fund. The extraordinary expenditure for public works was 4,240,566. The regular estimates for 1875-76 place the revenue at 50,991,000/-, and the ordinary expenditure at 49,744,000/-, including 656,000/-, the balance of a sum expended for the relief of the famine. The extraordinary expenditure for public works is estimated at 4,143,000/- The Budget for 1876-77 estimates the revenue at 50,480,000/-, and the ordinary expenditure at 50,336,000/- The extraordinary expenditure for public works is fixed at 3,750,000/- to meet which is proposed during the financial year 1876-77, to raise 3,000,000/- by loan, including 360,000/- on account of the Sindhi and Holker railways. The remaining 2,610,000/- is to be raised in England by the Secretary of State. No loan is to be raised in India, and no fresh taxation is intended for the year 1876-77. The cash balances in India at the end of 1875-76 are estimated at 16,212,314, and at the end of 1876-77 at 18,552,614. The Budget shows all branches of the revenue to be favourable. The receipts from Customs duties have increased since the new Tariff Act came into operation, but the fall in the rate of exchange causes an estimated loss of over 1,000,000/- sterling. The Government has resolved to restrict the expenditure on public works as far as possible while exchange continues unfavourable. The drawings of the Secretary of State on the Indian Treasury during the ensuing financial year will amount to 13,500,000/- and the loss by exchange is estimated at 2,300,000/-

The Volunteer Review at Tring, on Easter Monday, was witnessed by many thousands of persons from the neighbouring towns and from London. About 7,000 volunteers of all ranks were present, including the local corps and a strong battalion from Manchester. Prince Edward of Saxe-Coburg was in supreme command, and the divisional leaders were Colonels Percy Fieldings and Lord Abinger. The sham-fight consisted only of simple manœuvres, which were described as having become confused at the end. The volunteers were drawn up to their various destinations in good time, and without casualties of any kind. The sham-fight and review upon the heights of Dover were witnessed by about 20,000 spectators.

A MAGNIFICENT illustrated edition of Victor Hugo's "Quatrevingt-treize" has recently been published in Paris. The great author himself, who is said to have considerable talent as an artist, has contributed three illustrations to this work. The other engravings are by such artists as Morn, Lançon, Brion, Daniel Vierge, Gibert, Kaff Bodmer, and Ed. Bayard.

MR. GEORGE GODWIN presided at the fourth annual meeting of the Art Union of London. It was stated in the report that the year's subscriptions had exceeded 20,000/-

MR. SIMS REEVES ON SPELLING BEES.—It is stated that Mr. Sims Reeves having been solicited to act as referee at a musical bee, which was projected to be held in the principal town of one of the home counties, and to be conducted on the plan of the now popular spelling bee, sent the following concise reply:—"Graengemouth, Beulah Spa, Upper Norwood, April 8, 1876.—Dear Sir,—I look upon spelling bees as an amusement for idiots, and beg to decline having anything to do with the one in question or any other. Yours obedient servant, J. Sims Reeves."

MALIBRAN.—Malibran's greatest amusement in Milan was the puppet Teatro Girofano, where she spent every moment she could spare. The sculptor Valerio Nesi struck a medal bearing her image, encircled in the words, "Maria Felicitas García Malibran"; and on the reverse, "Per universo consensu proclamata mirabilis null' aetate e' nata cantare, Milano, sub anno XXXIV." On the 14th October, her last appearance that season, the stage became a garden of bouquets and a shower of trinkets.

A DISTINGUISHED artist has just passed away in the person of John Graham Longh, the sculptor, whose name will be remembered as that of the individual to whom the execution of the lime for the Nelson monument in Trafalgar Square was originally entrusted. He died on the 9th inst. at his residence in Harewood Square, from a short but severe attack of bronchitis, aged about seventy years. His exact age, however, is not known, as it was one of his foibles to conceal the year of his birth. To Mr. Longh we owe the "Cousin" in the Egyptian Hall at the Mansion House, the colossal statue of George Stephenson at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and other statues of Judge Taltaurif, Sir Henry Lawrence, Lord Lawrence, etc.

BLUE JACKETS.—It remains to be seen whether, looking to the fact that fighting-ships are less numerous, and require smaller crews than formerly, and, looking also to the fact that, in the event of war, the merchant navy would be used extensively, some more definite attempt should not be made to introduce a common training-school for both ser-

vices, in place of the isolated efforts which are scattered throughout the country. By modifying the continuous service system so as to allow a man to leave the service at the end of a cruise; by giving him a small retaining fee so as to have a hold over him in case of war; and so found the nucleus of an important reserve; and, by providing in this way for a free current of bona fide sailors in and out of the navy, it is probable that most of the evils now complained of would vanish, that room would be found for the lessers and idlers now waiting in harbour ships for employment, and that an effective reserve would be established.

FACETIA.

MCCARTHY: "Quite right to get a pair of shoes, Molly, your fat'll look illigant in leather!"

MORAY: "But, sure, I can't pay for them till Christmas!"

M.C.C. (after a pause): "Truth, and if 'ud' be a pity to hide such a purty foot, amable!"

FUN.

FAT MAN: "Five-and-twenty minutes without a check! You must have found your waterproof, very warm, Mr. Wiggles?"

MR. WIGGLES: "My dear sir, there is nothing of use to be warm!"

PUNCH.

"I'LL, mother, that girl had the cheek to ask me to dance! Fortunately, I could tell her my card was full!"

PUNCH.

UNENCUMBERED.

POLICEMAN: "Where d' yr live?"

LOST CHILD: "Eoo-ee! don't know!"

POLICEMAN: "Who's yer father and mother?"

LOST CHILD: "Aint got none."

POLICEMAN (perplexed): "Are yer married?"

LOST CHILD: "No."

POLICEMAN: "Ah, shure, thin ye're all right! Away you go!"

PUNCH.

The fair sex are so fanciful and capricious that nothing can be more natural than their general application—Whimmen.

FUN.

THE AIR OF THE DOG THAT BIT HIM.—During the hearing of an action recently brought in Liverpool by a workman against the owner of a dog that had bitten him, the animal was accommodated with a seat on the bench; and so won the heart of judge and jury, by his amiable air and decorous behaviour that the plaintiff was immediately nonsuited. We would hazard a small trifle that if that dog had been scrooled a devotional work would have been found in his pocket. He was evidently up to the art of hambugging.

FUN.

STRANGE that the height of the rich man's ambition is to get into the House, and the height of the poor man's ambition is to keep out of the House.

FUN.

A GEM IN DIFFICULTY.—The proprietor of some gems recently stolen has agreed to pay his creditors six shillings in the pound. Like some ladies whose jewels mysteriously disappear, he has tried composition.

FUN.

HOW IT IS.—Mr. William Crookes, a scientific gentleman who has a great reputation, has been weighing up the sun's rays, which have hitherto been supposed to weigh nothing at all! He informs us that the weight of the solar rays on each square mile is equal to fifty-seven tons, and that the aggregate weight of the sun's rays on the entire globe is equal to three thousand millions of tons! No wonder so many people find it difficult to get along!

JUDY.

THE LIBERAL GATHERING.

QUESTION: "What is your name?"

ANSWER: "Well, some call me Liberal; but, after all, what's in a name?"

Q.: "What is your duty?"

A.: "My duty is to harass the other party to the utmost of my ability, to join in all popular criss and clamours and to stick at nothing that may obstruct me in so doing; even if illustrious characters have to be sacrificed and inherited principles abandoned.

JUDY.

MORE TRUTH.

FOND MOTHER (to Gov'nor to whom her son is apprenticed): "I am sorry to say, sir, that Harry won't be able to come to work for some little time—the doctor says he has got brain fever."

GOV'NOR (interrupting her): "Then the doctor is—a fool, madam, for the boy hasn't got any more brains than—that a donkey, ma'am!"

JUDY.

THE RINKER'S SONG.
Come, rink with me, and be my love!
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That better far than hills or fields:
The slippery floor of asphalt yields.

OF SKATES WITH RUBBER TIES & PAIR,
THOU O'er the asphaltic safety-bear;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come, rink with me, and be my love!
THE RINKER'S ANSWER.
If all the world and love were young,
And truth on every rinker's tongue;
These asphaltic pleasures might me move,
To rink with thee and be thy love.

TALK TO ME—not of flowers and posies;
Suppose we fall and break our noses?
Thou'll not prevail on me at all;
In truth, it is no joke to fall!

JUDY.

THE CLARINET is not a solo instrument. By an advertisement in a Belgian paper it is shown what it must accompany—"Wanted in a mirror factory, a little clarinet player who would be able to act as second-leader, conduct at the piano, drive the car of the firm, and take a hand in the outdoor affairs."

A young minister, somewhat distinguished for self-conceit, having failed disastrously before a crowded audience, was thus addressed by an aged brother: "If you had gone into that pulpit, feeling as you now do on coming out of that pulpit, you would have felt on coming out of that pulpit as you did when you went up into that pulpit."

ODE TO THE CUCKOO.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of spring!
Now Heaven repays thy rural roost,
And woods thy welcome sing,

What time the daisy decks the green;
Thy certain voice we hear;
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet,
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts—thy curious voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom
Thouliest the vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird; thy bower is ever green;
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thon hast no sorrow in thy song,
No Winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

GEMS.

NAVARRE forsakes a friend. When enemies gather around; when sickness falls on the heart; when the world is dark and cheerless, is the time to try true friendship. They who turn from the scene of distress betray their hypocrisy and prove that interest only moves them. If you have a friend who loves you, who has studied your interest and happiness, be sure to sustain him in adversity. Let him feel that his former kindness is appreciated and that his love was not thrown away. Real fidelity may be rare, but it exists—in the heart. They only deny its worth and power who never loved a friend, or laboured to make a friend happy.

THOMAS is nothing magnanimous in bearing disappointment with fortitude, when the whole world is looking on. Men in such circumstances act bravely from motives of vanity; but he who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity; who, without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity—even without hope to alleviate his misfortunes—can behave with

tranquillity, is truly great, and whether peasant or courtier, deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

THERE is no graver event in a man's life than marriage. It may prove an inestimable blessing, the subtle influence of which will permeate every hour of the day, strengthen every fibre of his mortal being, and by its satisfying repose to the affections, give its intellect a calmer and more continuous sweep. It may also prove a desolating evil, numbing the sympathies, irritating and scattering the intellectual energies, distracting the life.

GENTLENESS, which belongs to virtue, is to be carefully distinguished from the mean spirit and the fawning assent of sycophants. It renounces no just right from fear; it gives up no important truth from flattery; it is, indeed, not only consistent with a firm mind, but it necessarily requires a manly spirit and a fixed principle, in order to give it any real value.

It is delightful to have gifts made to you by those whom you esteem and love, because then, such gifts are merely to be considered as fringes to the garment—as inconsiderable additions to the mighty treasure of their affections, adding a grace, but no additional value, to what before was precious; and proceeding as naturally out of that as leaves burst upon the trees; but you feel it to be different when there is no regard for the giver to idealize the gift—when it simply takes its stand among your property as so much money's value.

It is much easier to think aright without doing right, than to do right without thinking aright. Just thoughts may fail of producing just deeds, but just deeds always beget just thoughts. For, when the heart is pure and straight, there is hardly anything which can mislead the understanding, in matters of immediate concernment; but the clearest understanding can do little in purifying an impure heart, or the strongest in straightening a crooked one.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STIMULANTS IN FEVER.—In the treatment of fever—typhus and other forms—too much reliance has been placed on alcoholic stimulants; that the percentage of cases requiring such stimulants is a low one; and that, while the administration of them, as regards quantity and kind, must depend entirely on a patient's condition, the utmost caution with what is known at present of their physiological action, is required. Digitalis, however, affords a powerful cardiac stimulant, which, while it gives force to the heart does not do so at the expense of the system, but rather is a conservative agent which controls expenditure and limits waste of vital action; it being, nevertheless, always the case, of course, that a large number of recoveries will occur without any specific treatment, save that care and guidance which provides for the want of the system without introducing complications.

USEFUL FACTS.—If the globes on a gas fixture are much stained on the outside by smoke, soak them in tolerably hot water in which a little washing soda has been dissolved. Then put a teaspoonful of powdered ammonia in a pan of lukewarm water and with a hard brush scrub the globes until the smoke stains disappear. Rinse in clean cold water. They will be as white as if new.—Tasteful ornaments may be made of natural leaves and sprays artificially frosted. This is done by means of powdered glass, which can easily be obtained by pounding some bits of glass with a heavy hammer, care being taken to protect the eye against flying splinters. Dip the object in thin-gum water and shake the powdered glass over them. When dry, handsome bouquets can be arranged.

WASHING FLANNELS AND LINENS.—To whiten flannel yellow by age, dissolve a pound and a half of white soap in 50lb. soft water, also half oz. spirits of ammonia. Immerse the flannel, stir well around for a short time, and wash in pure water. When black or navy blue linens are washed, soap should not be used. Take instead two potatoes grated into tepid soft water (after having them washed and peeled), into which a teaspoonful of ammonia has been put. Wash the linen with this and rinse in cold blue water. They will need no starch and should be dried and ironed on the wrong side. An infusion of hay will keep the natural colour in buff linens, an infusion of bran will do the same for brown linens and prints.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DON JUAN.—When two gentlemen meet a lady in public who is known only to one of them, the stranger to her must also salute, to avoid the appearance of singularity. But it is the etiquette for a lady in such a situation not to accost the gentleman known to her, and then the stranger known to her is relieved from the dilemma of either being rude, or saluting a person with whom he is totally unacquainted.

COSMOS.—Your face flushes in the evening and yet you never taste spirituous liquors. Very likely. The excitement undergone during the day produces nervous reaction. And probably, in avoiding one indulgence, you have plunged headlong into others. Smoking immediately after meals will cause the face to flush.

SUNSHINE.—You are wrong. The love that comes after marriage is stronger, more durable, more plastic, than that which preceded it. The love of courtship is a sentiment—that of marriage, a passion moulded into a duty.

OSWALD.—A servant cannot compel a master to give him a character. To refuse to give one to a servant who is fairly entitled to it is both cruel and unjust; but in all such cases the will of the employer is absolute.

G. S.—The Sublime Porte is the official title of the Government of the Ottoman Empire. Its derivation is said to be from a gate of the palace at Broussa, the original metropolis of the empire, called Bal Humayoor, the sublime gate.

F. G.—The true secret of happiness is to take it as it comes to us, moment by moment, in the little hourly rounds of our every day duties.

G. L.—The clairvoyants are a tribe of impostors; like their brethren, the pill quacks, their only object is to live upon the Peter Simples and Slenders of the day.

W. R.—Your lines are declined with thanks.

BRIGHT-EYED POLLY.—Will do well to still continue under the counsel of her parent and to try and win her father (who appears to be cold) over to her wishes he will be the very best to place her trust in and advise her how she may, if proper, obtain an interview with the young man she believes wishes for her company, and we think, if such is the fact, the young man is the proper person to make the proposal to you, and then obtain your consent to consult your parent and obtain his consent.

NELLIE T.—The statement which is always made by a declaration does alter the validity of the marriage, but should it be a false declaration the party or parties making such false declaration is liable to a criminal prosecution, and to be dealt with as the law directs.

FAKE LOVE.—Your attempt at poetry is very good, but we must decline the insertion of the present copy with thanks.

EDGAR.—Will do well to consult some medical man. Fuller's earth is very good to lessen irritation of the part affected.

GOON—may obtain the work she wishes for at any respectable booksellers, the price has been much reduced since its publication.

ROBB HOOP.—May obtain the information he requires at any cavalry depot in the locality he resides in.

MISS LILIA.—Your present must be in accordance with your position of means to purchase the same. A handsome volume of poems, or if jewelry, a silver or gold pencil-case, or a ring of a corresponding value to your wish.

HENRY McDONALD.—Your letter with stamp has not come to hand, or we should have promptly responded to your wish.

ENQUIRER.—As there are so many causes of the evils you complain of, we would advise you to consult some respectable medical man, as what would be a remedy in one case might injure in another.

N. T.—There is no other remedy for an ill-assorted marriage than separation. As you married late in life perhaps you are somewhat to blame. Old bachelors transformed into husbands are apt, too frequently, to fancy that they are still single; and who is more fretful, fidgety and domineering than an old bachelor?

VENITIAL.—We are really at a loss to tell you how to improve your beauty; but it is not to the heightening of colour you should look so much as the improvement of feature. Those who wish to realise the full power of personal beauty must cherish noble hopes and purposes; by having something to do and something to live for which is worthy of humanity and which, by expanding the capacities of the soul, gives expansion and symmetry to the body which contains it.

X. Y. Z.—Fortune-tellers are all impostors, and their vile calling subjects them to a prosecution at law, and imprisonment.

ROSE.—You must conquer your passion, and the best way to commence is to write out a list of the unworthy-

nesses of the man you say you love. Sum them up, and then ask yourself whether you could love such a creature. A male flirt is a disgusting fragment of humanity. It never had a heart, and as to a head, that of an orang-outang would hold as much common sense.

H. M.—We have heard the objection raised before, that practice at the pianoforte is injurious to the figure; but you must not believe the assertion, for pianoforte playing is as good an exercise for ladies as can be devised. Playing on the harp may, indeed, under some circumstances, be injurious, but not if you use ordinary cars and precautions.

A. M.—Most of the stories respecting the extraordinary qualities of the upas tree are fabulous. There is nothing whatever deleterious in its atmosphere; no birds drop down dead when they fly over it; neither is the poison employed in the execution of criminals. The truth is, that it is a tree with poisonous secretions and nothing more. It is very nearly related to the fig, some of the species of which are themselves well known to be deadly poisons.

M. W.—The tear of a loving girl, says an old book, is like a dewdrop on the nose, but that on the cheek of a wife is a drop of poison. Try to appear cheerful and contented, and your husband will probably be so, and when you have made him happy you will become so yourself, not in appearance but in reality. The skill required is not so great. Nothing flatters a man so much as the happiness of his wife—he is always proud of himself as the source of it. As soon as you are cheerful you will be lively and alert and every moment will afford you an opportunity of letting fall an agreeable word. Your education, which gives you an immense advantage, will greatly assist you, and your sensitiveness will become the noblest gift that Nature has bestowed on you, when it shows itself in affectionate assiduity, and stamps in every action a soft, kind and tender character, instead of wasting itself in secret repining.

EORNE asks—“Is it proper for a gentleman to put his arm around a young lady's waist when taking her out for a ride, they not being engaged?” That depends altogether upon the kind of horse he is driving. If it be hard on the bit he had better hold the reins with both hands. A gentle horse is always the best for a drive with a lady, however.

MAY-DAY'S "SWEET SIXTEEN."

Once upon a haleyon day.
In the fairy month of May,
Slumbering by her mother's lay
Innocence—twa infancy.

Hoplessness personified,
Nestling by her mother's side;
Wond'ring eyes, that opened wide,
Closing soft at eventide.

Tiny, clasping, waxy hand,
Model feet, that could not stand,
Hair that crisped in wave curl,
Crowned this witching, infant girl.

To commemorate the day,
She was called sweet Stella May;
From the month in which she came,
Was contrived this pretty name.

Weeks and months have rolled away,
As returns the first of May;
Old enough to creep and play,
Laughing, chattering all the day.

From the little one that crept,
That beside its mother slept,
Now has grown a graceful maid,
Casting childhood into shade.

Sixteen years have passed away,
Since the sun's first golden ray
Fell upon her infancy.
Lovely now as blush of day,
Is this charming Stella May.

W. B.—would like to correspond with a respectable young man, who must be fond of home.

GARBAGE and GEAR, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two respectable young ladies. Garbage is twenty-four, medium height, dark complexion, and thinks he would make a good husband. Gear is twenty-one, medium height, fair complexion; a Brighton girl preferred.

HARVEY S., tall, fair, light whiskers, a seaman in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with one of the young lady readers of this journal; a resident in London, preferred; respondent must be tall, fair, good looking, and of an amiable disposition.

CHARA and LIZZIE, respectively twenty-one and twenty, brown hair and eyes, both domesticated and loving dispositions, wish to correspond with two fair young gentlemen, with a view to matrimony.

NELL, eighteen, tall, dark complexion, hazel eyes, very domesticated, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark young gentleman.

MARION, eighteen, tall, dark, blue eyes, domesticated, would like to correspond with a good looking, fair young gentleman.

JULIE, nineteen, will receive some money when of age, would like to correspond with a good looking young man about twenty-four.

LILLIE, medium height, dark, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a tall, dark young man, about twenty-four.

NELLIE W., petite, fair, considered good looking, young man not over twenty-one.

H. P. E., a bank clerk, twenty, tall and fair, wishes to correspond with a young lady about the same age, living in London.

NANCY, twenty, dark hair and eyes, considered very handsome, has an income of \$500. a year, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about nineteen, who must be handsome and accomplished.

ALBERT S., a seaman in the Royal Navy, light hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady without money.

MAKES, twenty-nine, medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady.

EDWIN T., a plumber in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a dark young lady about twenty-two, who must be of medium height, loving, and not afraid to work.

ALBERT S., a seaman in the Royal Navy, light hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady without money.

SEMAPHORE, signalman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a good looking young lady, with a view to matrimony, respondent must be fond of home and music.

ANNIE, nineteen, dark complexion, considered good looking, will have a considerable fortune, wishes to correspond with a fair-complexioned young man about twenty-one, in a respectable position, loving, and fond of home.

LOVING LILY, nineteen, medium height, golden hair and brown eyes, very pretty, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman not under thirty; respondent must be a good musician, fond of home, and have a good income.

SWEET ANNIE, nineteen, tall and very handsome, black hair, deep blue eyes, good figure, musical, of a loving disposition, fond of children, wishes to correspond with a fair gentleman, not under thirty-five, who must have a good income.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

Ross is responded to by—George, eighteen, blue eyes, considered good looking.

Eva and Esmeralda by—Gustavus and Hercules, two friends.

Loving Lucy by—W. K., twenty, fair, medium height, blue eyes, a bank cashier with good salary, can sing, dance, is of pleasing manners, and thinks he is all she requires.

Lewis by—Ellen, twenty-two, medium height, good looking, well educated, and thinks she is all she requires.

H. H., ADELA, or N. by—Augustus M., who would like to correspond with either of the above-mentioned young ladies. He is twenty-two.

DOMESTICATED NELLY by—I. O. G. T., twenty-five, medium height, a collier.

VILLAGE BEAUTY by—C. D., rather tall, dark complexion.

K. K. by—Mary H., twenty-two, medium height, fond of home.

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